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EARLY STEPS IN THE FOLD

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONVERTS AND INQUIRERS

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BY

F. M. DE ZULUETA, S.J.
AUTHOR OF "LETTERS ON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE," "NOTES ON DAILY COMMUNION," ETC.

REVISED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NEW CODEX OF CANON LAW, BY

H. DAVIS, S.J.
ST. BEUNO'S COLLEGE

'Perfect Thou my goings in Thy paths: that my footsteps be not moved."—*Ps. xvi. 5.*

THIRD EDITION REVISED

LONDON
BURNS OATES & WASHBOURNE LTD.
28 ORCHARD STREET 8-10 PATERNOSTER ROW
W. 1 E.C. 4
AND . AT . MANCHESTER . BIRMINGHAM . AND . GLASGOW
1921

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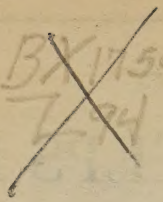

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VICAR. APOSTOLICUS MENEVIENSIS.

The attention of the Reader is called to the *inserted* Appendix concerning the duties of Parents and others in the matter of *Children's First Communion* under the recent Decree, 'Quam Singulari,' of August 8, 1910.

FOREWORD

It will be well to explain at the outset the precise scope of the following pages. This work makes no pretension to supply the place of a complete Manual of Instructions for those contemplating reception into the Catholic Church, such as it is the priest's duty to impart to intending converts.

If in its earlier pages it addresses itself to those who are still without the Fold, this is not for furnishing them with that full and most necessary instruction upon the claims of the Church to the submission of all Christians, and upon the particular doctrines which she delivers to men in the Name of Christ. The opening chapters, therefore, are merely meant for smoothing away certain difficulties of a more general character which commonly deter earnest seekers for the truth from seriously studying Catholic claims.

As its title suggests, this publication is mainly addressed to those who have already been received into communion with the Apostolic See of Rome, after going through a course of careful training. Even in their case it may happen that the instructor has been obliged to limit himself to

explaining the articles of essential belief, and the few practical obligations which bind all Catholics alike under pain of mortal sin—such as hearing Mass on certain days, the Easter Duty, and the observance of Fasts and Abstinences. Time may have failed him or his catechumen for a complete treatment of the details of Catholic life. He may have left these to be acquired gradually through sermons, public catechisms, missions, or spiritual retreats, as well as by intercourse with other Catholics. But this method of filling up gaps in the convert's knowledge may prove somewhat tedious and uncertain. In the meantime the new child of the Church perhaps experiences a demoralizing sense of discouragement as the effect of backwardness, and feels like a "fish out of water." On finding so much that is new and unintelligible in the richness of Catholic faith and practice, the convert begins to yield sadly to the persuasion that he or she is not "a proper Catholic at all"—a frame of mind that easily develops into serious temptation against perseverance. And yet withal there may be the consciousness of much mental and moral conflict endured in the course of conversion, of considerable sacrifices generously made, and, as not infrequently happens, no little persecution suffered from bigoted relatives, friends, or employers. There arises the painful self-questioning: "Has it all been toil and suffering in vain? Have I

come out of the land of spiritual bondage, through desert wanderings and hardships, into the Promised Land, only to find myself an alien there, out of sympathy with my new religious surroundings? I cannot doubt that, in becoming a Catholic, I have followed the inspirations of divine grace, and entered into the liberty of the children of God. Yet perhaps I have been so long used to the atmosphere of slavery, to the fogs of error and doubt, as to have become permanently unfitted for enjoying the pure air of freedom and truth."

The present volume is an attempt at meeting this and kindred states of the convert mind. May it help somewhat to develop in the newly-found sheep that sense of "at-homeness" in the One True Fold so conducive to inward peace and happiness, and—especially in the case of less robust souls—so necessary for growth and expansion in the love and service of Christ!

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MOUNT S. MARY'S COLLEGE,
nr. CHESTERFIELD, ENGLAND.

Feast of S. Gregory, Apostle the Anglo-Saxon race, March 12, 1910.

PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION

THE publication of the New Codex of Canon Law has necessitated a few corrections in the text. These corrections alone and no others have been made, so that the work still represents the views of its esteemed author. The reviser is responsible only for the changes made on pp. 113, 133, 134, 136, 146, 147, 155, 158, 159, 160, 217, 222, 230, 329, 344. It is hoped that the work may thus be in accordance with the present discipline of the Church, and may retain its deservedly high place in Catholic literature.

H. DAVIS, S.J.

ST. BEUNO'S COLLEGE.

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EARLY STEPS IN THE FOLD

CHAPTER I

FROM AFAR

WHILE on a holiday tour some years ago, I was making for the old-time city of Ilchester, formerly a favourite haunt of mine, and completely lost my way. After wandering to and fro, uphill and downhill for many weary hours, I had the good fortune at last to strike the right road, and—footsore and hungry—found myself entering the venerable city gates. My whole being craved for rest and refreshment: so my first thought was to seek out some hostel which should provide me suitably with both. It was however many years since I had visited the city: and, with hostels as well as with men, "times change." Hence, it seemed to me the part of a prudent man, neither an epicurean nor a tramp, to make some inquiries before committing his aching bones and famished inner being to the tender mercies of any one of these asylums for man and beast.

Each of the pedestrians of whom I inquired suggested his particular favourite, founding his estimate, no doubt, upon the quality of the taproom rather than upon any expert knowledge of bedrooms and *table d'hôte*, which formed my chief anxiety. Most of the inns mentioned were

known to me from the distant past, and I retained, moreover, no very grateful memories of their hospitality. There was, I knew, one "hotel," by name "The Ark," generally reckoned as the oldest established in Ilchester. Yet, upon my naming it as a possible refuge, each and all of my kind informants seemed agreed that, wherever else I pitched my tent, I should certainly repent having gone *there*.

Whether it was that many friends and acquaintances of mine had at various times taken up their abode at "The Ark," and evidently had never regretted it, or that I knew these other houses were run by former waiters of the more ancient establishments who had quarrelled with its manager and set up opposing businesses in a small way, or else that a natural doggedness decided me to investigate for myself, I cannot tell you. Somehow or other, "The Ark" had some vague fascination for me. So, after politely thanking my informants for their counsels, I did what so many seekers after copious advice so often end by doing—I followed my own. I determined to try my luck at the parent house. Accordingly I turned my footsteps in its direction, when, lo! upon entering the long main street leading straight to the object of my quest, I found myself confronted by a forbidding placard: "No thoroughfare during repairs." The whole roadway, nay, even the pavements, were up, huge stacks of granite blocks, numberless stout barriers, behind which were crowded all the plant of the contractor, hopelessly stopped my advance. Tired out as I was, the prospect of picking my way through all these obstacles, and the recollection of all I had been told *against* "The Ark," which now rushed upon me with renewed force, utterly overwhelmed me, and in a despairing mood I retraced my steps, sadly asking myself whether night

would not overtake me ere I found relief for my pressing needs.

Which things, dear reader, as you will have guessed, are said by way of allegory. This imaginary tale may serve not inaptly as a picture of what many a time befalls the non-Catholic—the "non-*Roman* Catholic," as some would prefer me to write it—who, worn out by his wanderings through many profitless by-roads of religious thought, and fairly bewildered by the inconsistencies of other guides to Heaven, is driven to look for peace and certainty in the "Ark of Salvation," as the Church in communion with the Pope has been called by antiquity. Applying the parable.

The religious wayfarer is perhaps alive to the fact that, whatever may be alleged against that Church, she is at all events historically the most ancient of all Christian Churches—a truth which of itself appears to him all but conclusive. For, apart from its Divine Founder's express promise that "the gates of hell" shall never prevail against His Church, founded on Peter[1]—a church set by God for man's guide in all time, and yet liable to essential decay so as to have failed in its Divine mission to the world, is to him unthinkable. The Church of Christ, he argues, must have begun with Christ and His Apostles, and must still exist somewhere, or the promises of its Divine Founder would have been falsified. *For* Rome.

If he be English, he has read enough of serious history to know that he is an Anglo-Saxon by origin, and that the Christian faith was brought to his forefathers by a Roman monk, sent by Pope Gregory, whose Benedictine brethren once filled with Divine praises, by night and by day, so many of those unrivalled English abbeys and monasteries which the so-called "Reformers" robbed and ruined. Those Roman monks could Old England and Rome.

[1] Matt. xvi. 18.

not be the religious progenitors of the present Church of England. No Church pageant, however discreetly eclectic in its dramatic incidents, has succeeded in convincing him that an English Church, which fundamentally rejects the supreme authority of Rome, can be the legitimate child of a pre-Reformation Church which held submission to that same authority as a necessary condition for genuine Christianity and for salvation.

Did not the Anglo-Saxon Saint, Venerable Bede, in a well-known passage, declare communion with the See of Peter to be a test of orthodoxy and a condition for gaining Heaven? For he wrote: "Therefore Blessed Peter, who had confessed Christ with a true faith, and followed Him with sincere love, received the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and the headship of judicial power in a special manner, that all believers throughout the world might know that whosoever separate themselves in any way from the unity of the faith, *or from his fellowship*, can neither be free from the chains of their sins nor enter the gates of the heavenly kingdom."[1]

"Cuckoo" continuity.

The material possession of ancient ecclesiastical titles, cathedrals, benefices, formalities, and the like, no more proves the religious identity of the present Church of England with the Church of Augustine, Anselm, Wilfrid, and the rest, than the present tenure of office and emoluments by the head of the French State identifies the French Republic with the rule of Louis the Fourteenth.

Peace in believing.

As for the Dissenting Free Churches around, these—our inquirer sees—are but separated fragments of the National Church, or—as Catholics would put it—schisms from a schism. When, however, our religious explorer would fain draw nigh to the ancient Catholic Church in order to

[1] *Genuine Homilies of Bede*, bk. ii., hom. 16.

ascertain whether she, perhaps, can give rest to his wandering steps, at once various preliminary obstacles interpose themselves and hinder his approach. Friends of his may, it is true, have found in her that peace of soul for which he craves. But here two difficulties confront him. Is that perfect peace, that religious finality, a thing lawfully to be desired in this world of man's probation? Is not its pursuit selfish? Ought not one to be content to bear the torment of uncertainty and postpone the enjoyment of mental rest to the world to come? Is not this life intended as a trial, a groping in the dark? There are some poetic minds for whom this attitude of false heroism has its attractions. They forget the injunction, "Seek peace, and pursue it." They neglect the exhortation, "Now, the God of hope fill you with all peace and joy in believing, that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Ghost."[1] If trials be desired by the heroic soul, these will prove plentiful enough even to the member—or, perhaps we should say, *especially* to the member—of the Catholic Church. But to make one's own trials deliberately and for their own sake is not rational. They will not be wanting without our seeking, and it is by means of the certain truth which the Catholic Church alone can give us that we are enabled to rise superior to the trials and temptations of this world: "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith." It is not part of God's Will that our trial on earth should consist in uncertainty concerning the *principles* by which we are to work out our salvation. For, what did Christ come to give us? "I am the way, the truth, and the life." And, again: "I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly." He came "to enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the

[1] Rom. xv. 13.

shadow of death, to guide their footsteps in the way of peace." The Christian's combat is to be *moral* rather than doctrinal, and there will be plenty of it and to spare, without foolishly declining the weapon with which victory is to be obtained—a clear knowledge of the revealed principles on which the battle is to be conducted. There is no special merit in walking for ever through a fog, if a clear and well-illumined atmosphere be attainable.

Against Rome.

This obstacle having been surmounted, our inquirer's progress is stayed by the deep impression made upon him by the evil things which he has heard or read of the Catholic system, or he is scared by the severe restraint which it will place upon his natural, and perchance irregular, inclinations.

A "complicated" religion.

Let us review some of these initial difficulties.

The Catholic religion appears to be so very *complicated*. There is so much to be learnt and understood in point of doctrine, and so many things to be attended to in the sphere of religious practice. Now, if I were to become a Catholic, the inquirer may say, I should like to be a *really good one*. Yet, with such qualifications as I possess, or considering the busy life I lead, or the advanced period of life which I have reached, I have no prospect of being able to master it all.

This is not an uncommon difficulty. It is, however, to a very large extent, an imaginary one. Perhaps, my friend, you fancy that, in order to be a real Catholic, you must grasp all the ins and outs of each tenet of the Faith—that you must have all the theological proofs at your fingers' ends, and be able to answer every objection that can be urged against it? Were that so, what chance could there be for the illiterate poor? Yet any Catholic priest will tell you that some of his most satisfactory parishioners come precisely from

the least educated classes. A religion that could be properly grasped only by the educated or clever would stand self-condemned. It could not possibly be the religion of Him Who gave it as a sign of His having come, that "the poor have the gospel preached to them." Perhaps you have sometimes assisted at Catholic services? If so, you must have noticed how large was the proportion of poor among the congregation. By this, of course, it is not meant that the poor have an equally intelligent knowledge of their faith, although one meets some exceptionally holy souls among them who receive from God an insight into Divine mysteries which eclipses the learning of the trained theologian. What is meant is that they possess the Catholic *Faith* in quite as great perfection as the more educated. For religious faith is not the outcome of human study, but a supernatural gift from God, and thus we find men who have studied Catholicism and really understand it as a doctrinal and moral system, yet have no religious faith in it, nor any mind to accept it as the Divinely given rule of man's belief and conduct. They study the Catholic faith as they might Buddhism, or Confucianism, or any other philosophic system.

"Implicit" Faith.

It is necessary to notice the difference between what is called "implicit" faith and "explicit" faith, in order to grasp the relation between the illiterate Catholic believer and his more learned brother in the Faith. The Catholic, be he learned or the reverse, accepts the dogmas of the Church, not because he has personally proved to himself the truth of each of them, but simply because they are all proposed to him by the official teaching of the spiritual society to which he belongs, and which he firmly believes to be so aided by the "Spirit of Truth" as to be incapable of imposing upon its members any doctrine not of God, and,

consequently, not infallibly true. The arguments in favour of a given tenet are not what a soul needs, except as a temporary means of arriving at the fact that God has revealed it. It is the truth that is mainly wanted, not the process by which it is reached. Hence, if there exists on earth some absolutely unerring messenger of God to state for us the substance of these infallible truths, the reasons for them, and their more minute details, can be dispensed with. In the same way, in the building of an archway, props are at first required, but may be thrown aside when the structure has been completed.

Catholicism based on authority.

Now, belief in the presence on earth of such an authoritative messenger of God forms the very foundation of the Catholic Faith. It is, one may say, the distinctive mark separating off Catholicism from every other form of religion.

A search in vain.

I remember, as a schoolboy, drawing near to the end of my college course, walking with my Jesuit master into Westminster Abbey. At its entrance we met a venerable-looking old man, evidently a non-Catholic minister of some sort, who accosted my guide, and entered into amiable conversation with him. Some mildly controversial talk ensued between them. Only this do I remember: My master said: "Well, sir, I suppose the difference between you and me is mainly this: I recognize on earth a Divinely given authority for teaching me the way to Heaven, and you do not." "I suppose that is it," replied the clergyman; and he added pathetically: "Here am I, an old, old man, with one foot in the grave, who can say honestly that he has spent his life in search of God's truth, and yet I cannot say that I have found it."

The main point.

The first step, then, in instructing inquirers into the Catholic Faith is to convince them of the truth of the claim made by the Church of the

Popes that she is the *one* and *only* accredited messenger from God. That she is really such must, indeed, be proved. The inquirer has a right, as a reasonable, responsible being to such proof. Nay, more: he has a *duty* to satisfy himself upon this fundamental point.

For it would be just as wrong for him to adopt the Catholic Faith without assuring himself that it was God's infallible message to man, as to refuse to accept it, once he was convinced of its Divine origin.

A short cut.

But as soon as this conviction takes possession of him, it becomes short work with the individual doctrines and essential practices which God's message contains. The messenger once having been recognized as unerring, it follows necessarily that every particle of her message must be infallibly true. This means, in other words, that every portion of the Catholic Faith is God's revelation—a communication of the mind and will of Infinite Truth and Truthfulness Itself, which cannot be called in question by a creature of God without manifest sin. The individual doctrines, whatever their mystery, however far exceeding our natural comprehension, and *whether to our liking or not*, are so many *absolutely certain facts* to be accepted as such with unhesitating faith. And just as I accept the fact that there was an earthquake at Messina, or that M. Blériot successfully aviated the English Channel, though I may not have witnessed either event, nor really tested the Press reports of the same, nor even troubled myself as to *how* it came about, so—still more—on learning from God's messenger, the Catholic Church, that Christ is God, that He is as truly present in the Eucharist as He was in Bethlehem or on the Cross, that He gave power to His priests to forgive sins in His name, etc. . . ., I assent to all these truths as unquestionable facts,

and, as I hope to be saved, shape my conduct in accord with them. I assume, in fact, the attitude towards the teaching Church of a little child towards its parent, and believe whatever she tells me : "Except," said Our Blessed Lord, "ye become like little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of God."

The one thing needed.

Complications are thus removed. Once the inquirer has fully grasped the *one single* truth of the Church's Divinely given *Infallibility in teaching*, the rest of the work is comparatively simple. It only consists in learning the doctrinal *facts* to which the Church bears witness, and in accepting them in heart and conscience. And even should some of these facts escape my notice at first, or, after coming under it, pass from memory, my firm mental assent to *whatever the infallible messenger teaches* as necessary to be believed and to be practised, is amply sufficient to constitute me a true and faithful Catholic. This acceptance *en masse* of religious truths on the Divine authority of Him Who reveals them through His infallible Church on earth, without full knowledge of their details, is called "implicit faith."

So, in human affairs, if I entrust my gravest temporal concerns to one in whom I have complete confidence, and say, "I don't know precisely what he has arranged for me, but I place the utmost reliance in his business capacity and integrity," people call my confidence "implicit." Were it not for that *implicit faith* here spoken of, a dying non-Catholic, who wished, as so many do, to depart this life in the bosom of the Catholic Church, would have to be refused admission, since, clearly, there will be no time for instructing such a person in detail. And yet, if the dying person—convinced of the Divine truth of the Church—is prepared to accept all she teaches, this implicit faith suffices, and he leaves this world as

true a Catholic before God as if there had been full instruction.

Where true complication lies.

The above reflections can surely lead us to no other conclusion than that complication and perplexity are to be found rather in all *other* forms of Christianity *except* the Catholic. For, other religions—*ultimately* resting, as they all do, on Private Judgment, and therefore requiring personal examination and testing of each grain of doctrine—make demands upon the mental powers and leisure of the inquirer such as the young, the toiling bread-winner, or the illiterate cannot meet. The Catholic Faith, on the contrary, is pre-eminently adapted to the masses of mankind, who are forced by circumstances, or meagre talents, to depend upon *authority* and its *teachings*.

Wanted —humility.

The natural pride and independence of man recoils from such a system, as being unworthy of thinking men and women of this twentieth century. Does it not, in fact, lower the learner to the level of mere children? *Most certainly it does* —that is, within the sphere of religious belief and moral conduct. It calls upon man to humble himself before His Maker. But—in view of the Master's words—a Christian cannot view this humbling of himself before God as *degradation*, rather than the prelude to being "exalted."[1] Our Faith makes us children again. But this very feature establishes the identity of Catholicism with the religion of Him Who taught that, for "entering the kingdom of Heaven," it is just little children that we must resemble—little children, with their submission and implicit belief in whatever they are taught. Be our repute for learning and ability, or any other quality, in the various walks of life, what it may, we are, and—as dependent creatures drawn from nothing by the

[1] Matt. xxiii. 12.

hand of God—must ever *essentially remain*, mere children in the supernatural order of religion. As Father William Faber has expressed it so graphically: "We *never become of age* with Almighty God."[1] A religion, therefore, that is not *taught*, and taught decisively, as by "one having power"[2] and authority, even as Christ taught, and whose rulings are not to be accepted as a child does the word of parent or teacher, that religion is plainly not Christianity as portrayed in the recorded utterances of Jesus Christ and of His Apostles.

Study recommended.

For all this, we are not forbidden, as Catholics—nay, we are encouraged—to acquire as intelligent a knowledge of our Faith as opportunities allow, provided we ever bear in mind that we are dealing with truths of Divine revelation, and, as such, neither to be *judged* by us nor criticized, as though, after all, there were "a good deal to be said on the other side."

Catholic duties few.

So far, we have dealt mainly upon the doctrinal side of the Catholic Faith. But if, in the matter of dogmas, our religion is less complicated than at first would appear, are not the *practices* which it enjoins very arduous and numerous? For example: High Mass, Low Mass, Benediction, Rosaries, Medals, Fasting and Abstinence, Prayers for the Dead, Apostleship of Prayer, Easter Duties, "Children of Mary," Frequent and Daily Communion, Confession to a priest, Holy Water, etc. . . .

In this miscellaneous list there have been jumbled up together, of malice aforethought, a whole crowd of things which stand, nevertheless, on very different planes. In order to sort them, and many others not mentioned, it is necessary to separate things *of obligation under pain of sin* from a heap of other things which are of *free*

[1] *Creator and Creature* [2] Matt. vii. 29.

and *perfectly optional* practice. For the Church of God, while she imposes certain practical observances under pain of sin, at the same time leaves an extremely large margin for pure *generosity* in God's service. Like a wise general —in the matter of *obligatory* practices—she recognizes the truth that the march of the army is the march of the slowest in its ranks.

The three duties.

Now, apart from the observance of the Ten Commandments, which cannot be viewed as a Catholic peculiarity, the number of *additional* obligations which she enforces on all her children alike, is, in truth, *very small*. We may sum them up under *three heads*, as follows: The duty of hearing one Mass on Sundays, and—in England on eight other days—of observing the days of Fasting and Abstinence, and of receiving Holy Communion at least once a year (about Easter), which commonly involves going first to Confession. This is surely a greatly reduced list![1]

Moderation of the Church.

Beyond these duties there are *none* which bind every Catholic, and even in these the Church does not enforce her will regardless of serious inconveniences which their observance may entail. Thus, for instance, she excuses from attendance at Mass on obligatory days persons living at a distance from a church, those who are sick, or prevented either by home duties of serious importance, or by the necessity of gaining their daily bread. The Catholic Church is a "mother," and not a harsh or inconsiderate "stepmother," in the traditional sense. Of course, those who intend marriage have to observe her matrimonial laws. But such persons form a class apart, albeit a large one. Yet even here much of what she exacts is only what decent, self-respecting men

[1] There is, of course, the duty of contributing to the support of spiritual pastors. But this, again, is not peculiar to Catholicism.

and women outside her fold would ordinarily do. What is here maintained is that the strict obligations binding all Catholics in common are *very few*.

Are Catholic duties arduous?

But are they not, at all events, very trying? There is one that very likely proves so to those who have been unused to it, and that is Confession to a priest. I say it *may* prove so, because cases certainly occur in which a *desire* to unburden the conscience in this way is felt as a strong motive for seeking the Catholic Church. It has been an attraction, not a deterrent. But it may freely be acknowledged that the prospect of having to reveal the most hidden stains upon the soul to a fellow-man is a terrible *anticipation* to many, and not uncommonly explains their reluctance to obeying the voice of conscience calling them into the Catholic Church.

Protestant fictions.

Of course, what in nine cases out of ten causes terror is not Confession, as actually practised by Catholics, but a scarecrow, made out of the rags of some ignorant or designing Protestant tract, or shilling "shocker," which is frightening the bird off the rich cornfields of the Church.

Here are some fair specimens of the fantastic notions about "Romish" Confession entertained and asserted as truths by those who never have, nor would for worlds, set foot inside a confessional. Yet they know all about it notwithstanding!

1. That people pay for having sins forgiven! Catholic priests would not be the poor men they mostly are, if every sin had its tax!

2. That two persons tell their sins simultaneously, and overhear one another—an idea that might be suggested by the fact that some confessional-boxes in churches have a place for a penitent on *both* sides of the confessor's compartment, to save the delay which would occur between the departure of one penitent and the entrance of

another. This curious fancy did actually influence one Protestant for a time against the Catholic Church.

3. That the " penances " enjoined by the confessor are something very extraordinary and difficult to perform. We know the anecdote of the old lady who, on seeing an acrobat going through most agile feats in the presence of a priest, supposed these to be the " penance " imposed by him in Confession, and, though anxious to become a Catholic, she assured the priest that she really could never bring herself to go through such performances at *her* time of life ! There is no need to fear lest the confessor (I mean the Catholic confessor) may enjoin the adoption of severe corporal austerities or special hardships, and still less anything that would be noticed by others.

As you probably know already, the Catholic Church does not allow her priests to carry on their ministry according to their own personal ideas or " fads." There is a received way of conducting business in the confessional. The common custom in the matter of " penances " is to enjoin acts of private devotion, such as the recital of certain prayers (and these, even if to be said more than once, do not accumulate from confession to confession), the hearing of a Mass on a weekday (when the penitent can do this) and the like. Moreover, in the unlikely event of something very difficult in the above kinds being prescribed, the penitent is always at liberty to represent the special hardship, and ask respectfully for an exchange.

4. That the priest *will make use of the knowledge* he receives, if not to the extent of revealing it to others, at all events so far as to alter his behaviour towards the penitent in ordinary intercourse, and show that he has conceived a lower

Is Confession safe ?

opinion of the person, or is mindful of what he has confessed.

Strict duty of secrecy.

Now, the inquirer must know that the confessor is bound by the *most sacred obligation of secrecy known to the human conscience* to treat the knowledge of sin imparted in the confessional *precisely as if he had never had it.* He is strictly bound to this, even though fidelity should cost him his reputation or his very life. Needless to say, certain sensational plays and novels, with plots turning upon the Sacramental Secret, are ignorant parodies upon Catholic belief and practice. The martyrdom suffered by John Nepomucene, Canon of Prague, in the fourteenth century, rather than betray the confidences of the virtuous wife of his sovereign the Emperor Wenceslaus—a vicious and jealous husband—forms a striking object-lesson in the true practice of the *Catholic* confessional. The story of the martyr's life and violent death may be seen in the learned Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, May 16—the day he is venerated on Catholic altars. Nor have there been wanting other more modern and less widely known instances of heroic fidelity to the Seal of Confession. Perhaps the most practical proof that this secrecy is actually observed lies in the countless numbers of Catholics who use the confessional. This could never be, if experience had not fully established the safety of their secrets.

The "Pharisaic" objection.

5. That the priest, in undertaking to forgive sins committed against God, is *usurping a power* which manifestly belongs to the Divine Majesty offended, and to Him alone. As stated in the "Foreword," this volume does not pose as a complete manual of instruction in Catholic belief. Hence, it is beyond our present scope to prove that Christ, the Son of God, actually gave to the priests of His true Church a delegated share in

a power that belongs of right only to Him—that of absolving penitent souls from their sins, however many or heinous. All that need be said here is, *first*, that this objection is borrowed from the sworn enemies of Christ, to refute which Our Lord wrought a miracle.[1] *Secondly*, that presumably no Catholic priest is quite fool enough to imagine he can condone offences against God in his own power and right. None knows better than he that this can be done solely in virtue of a ministerial authority granted him by the great High-Priest, through His Sacrament of Holy Orders. In a similar way, a civil magistrate would have no power to try, condemn, or acquit his fellow-citizens except he were commissioned by the State—acting for the social community, which has itself received this power from God for its own protection. "For there is no power"—given to man over his equal, man—"but from God."[2] Thus, when Pilate blustered about his power either to free or to crucify, Our Lord answered firmly: "Thou shouldst not have any power against Me, unless it were given thee from above."[3]

The priest's share.

This is not saying that a Catholic confessor is a mere cipher in the business, and merely assures the sinner "comfortably" that God will forgive, or has forgiven, any more than the civil magistrate merely declares to the prisoner that the State acquits him. Both delegates exercise a real power themselves, though one dependent for its efficacy, and for the conditions of its exercise, upon the higher authority, in which the power resides naturally.

Charge of laxity.

6. The Confession and priestly Absolution unwarrantably relieve the penitent of the responsibility of his misdeeds. "You Catholics"—so the

[1] Luke v. 20-26; Matt. ix. 2-8.
[2] Rom. xiii. 1. [3] John xix. 11.

objection runs—"do what wrong you like, and then just run off to the priest, tell him what you have done, and he makes it all right for you. It is the same with your 'Indulgences.' You do wrong, and then get whitewashed with an 'Indulgence,' or, wishing to enjoy a holiday from the keeping of God's Commandments, you apply in advance for an 'Indulgence' for 50, 100, or 300 days (one *sees* it in your prayer-books)—a licence, in fact, to sin for a stated period, without incurring the unpleasant consequences in the next world!"

Tangle unravelled.

Let us take breath! Here we have a whole crop of misconceptions as to fact and of muddles. If the objection to relief from the guilt of sin and from its consequences hereafter, be a valid one, then the same difficulty would recur, even with forgiveness given directly by God, without the intervention of a priest. But it must be remembered that no pardon is possible, in either case, unless the penitent not only confess his sin, but also be resolved at the time not to repeat it. And this determination, to be availing, must be *real* and *sincere*. Otherwise the absolution of the priest would be valueless, however complete the acknowledgment of sin.

Effect of Indulgences.

With Indulgences there is even less difficulty. For, first of all, these grants are in no sense pardons for the *guilt* of sin. They can avail no one who has not *first removed* that guilt by sincerely repenting of any grave offence which stains his conscience. What Indulgences do is to cancel—partly or wholly—*the debt of temporal satisfaction* incurred by the sin repented of, which the justice of God will still exact, either in this world, or else in Purgatory. How Indulgences granted by the Church possess this power is a point to be dealt with more fully when we come to deal with them later on.

The man who wants to commit sin is the reverse of repentant. He is therefore *disqualified* for obtaining an Indulgence for himself. The above notion of a Catholic Indulgence belongs to a large class of false charges preferred by enemies of the Catholic Faith, either in malice, or in gross and not easily excusable ignorance. Do not, inquiring reader, suffer yourself to be drawn off the scent by accusations against Catholics which your common sense should tell you could only be true on the supposition that we are all of us either a pack of knaves or of fools. Perhaps you count a few subjects of the Pope among your friends and acquaintances. These may have their weaknesses, but you can still see that they are neither so desperately wicked nor so desperately silly as to go to a priest for leave to do wrong. This, apart from the trifling fact that the ordinary priest has *no power to grant Indulgences at all*, and that even a Bishop's power in the matter is very limited! Indulgences suppose repentance.

There is another *genuine* aspect of Confession which may certainly prove a serious hindrance to embracing the Catholic Faith, and this is the humiliation of revealing to a fellow-man—bound though he is by the most inviolable secrecy—the most hidden sins of one's life. This substantial difficulty will be treated more at length when we come to deal with those who are so far advanced as to be on the point of reception into the Fold. For the moment, it will be enough to make one or two observations. Difficulty of Confession.

The ordeal of confessing for the first time is to many a trying one; to others it is felt, on the contrary, as a great relief and comfort. Those who welcome their first Confession can take care of themselves. It is those who dread it that most need to be reassured. Differences in people.

Sources of comfort.

These should realize that *they do not stand alone.* To no one, probably, is the acknowledgment of guilt, however secret, a pleasant task. Yet it is not one imposed by priest on other people. It is not a case of "priestly tyranny," since *every member* of the Church—laity and priests, and not excepting *the Pope himself*—is bound to confess his sins humbly to a priest. For the Church teaches that Confession of mortal sins is not a law of her own making, but a law of Christ binding all His followers—a Divine, not a mere human, precept. Perhaps the best mitigation of the dread lies in an appeal to common sense. After all, what would be demanded of you in regard to Confession is only what hundreds of your fellow-countrymen are bravely facing every year, in the determination to provide for the safety of their souls by entering the Catholic Fold. They are made of flesh and blood like yourself, and what they can do, and seem besides all the happier for doing, cannot be as terrible in reality as it appears to you in anticipation. The state of mind of a convert, when his or her first Confession is over, has not unfrequently been conveyed in the surprised question: "And is that *all?*"

The one question.

To sum up. The truth is that objections to Confession grounded on its unpleasantness are beside the point. The only question, surely, which should concern the sincere searcher after religious truth is simply this: Has Our Saviour, or has He not, made Confession to one of His priests a necessary condition for my obtaining His forgiveness for my sins? If He has, then confess I must. Beggars may not be choosers. I do, indeed, require to satisfy myself that such, in fact, *is* His decree; but, given that it is, my likes or dislikes have plainly nothing to do with the case—that is, if I want to save my soul by

submitting to the Will of God. My religious training may have taught me to prefer "going straight to Christ"—as the phrase is—and to reject all human go-betweens as an unwarrantable interference between my soul and its Saviour. But if Christ allows me to approach Him at all it is for Him—my God and Saviour—to fix the terms of access: if He appoint a confessor for the purpose, the human go-between ceases to be an "interference," and becomes an indispensable help—like a bridge for crossing a river, and not like a landslip obstructing a railway-line.

The "exam" bogey.

Another stumbling-block may be the false idea that the preliminary "instructions" in Catholic doctrine, already mentioned, will be followed by a stiff "public exam" of some sort before reception can take place. "Now, you know, Father," said a prospective convert, "I am perfectly hopeless at any 'exam': it would be useless to attempt one. Fancy having to answer all sorts of puzzling questions in religion before a board of priestly examiners about the Trinity, Incarnation, Real Presence, and such. Why, the thing is out of the question. I simply *couldn't do it!*"

One can fully sympathize with anyone haunted by such a fantastic notion of requirements for reception into the Church. But, fortunately for most converts, nothing of the kind takes place. By "instructions" are merely meant informal chats with the priest, or other instructor, during which the teaching of the Church is explained in a familiar manner. Questions, difficulties, and objections are freely put by the candidate—nay, he is encouraged to put them. When the priest, on his side, and the candidate *on his or her side*, is satisfied, the day and time for reception is fixed, and the ceremony—which is a quiet affair—takes place without further ado. Everything can be done as unobtrusively as the neophyte can

wish. Ask any convert you like to give you his own experiences.

The first step.

It sometimes happens that one who is convinced of the truth of Catholicism, or at least sufficiently so to feel bound in conscience to inquire into the matter, desires to go forward, but has no idea how to set about it. What is the first step ? he asks himself.

1. Prayer.

The first step is to *pray*, and pray *earnestly* for light to see the truth, and for courage and strength to listen to God's voice, and to obey it, faithfully regardless of the cost to self or *to others dear to self*.

A work of such momentous importance, one so closely concerning the salvation of one's immortal soul, cannot be carried to a happy issue without the aid of God's grace. "Without Me you can do nothing."[1]

The need of grace.

Moreover, we are here dealing with a step likely to excite much opposition from friends and relatives, to whom, perhaps, we may be greatly indebted, on whom we may depend for worldly favours and advancement. Harder than all, those whom we love, and who love us, will cling about us, like the family of the Roman Regulus, and, for want of better knowledge, tearfully entreat us not to enter on a path—the path to Rome —which they have always been taught to view as the road to wickedness and final ruin. They may foresee that the contemplated step will mean for them temporal loss and social ostracism. In such a fiery ordeal, the human heart needs to be strong indeed, like that of Blessed Jeanne d'Arc at the stake, lest it be false to God and to conscience, and risk eternity for the sake of this world's peace. Such strength is not to be found in the resources of frail humanity. Only the supernatural power of Divine grace can sustain

[1] John xv. 5.

weak nature and raise it above itself. It alone can lend a victorious force to those words of Christ : " What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul ?" And again : " He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than Me, is not worthy of Me." . . . " He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for Me shall find it."

The will clouding the intellect.

Let us bear in mind that faith is not the *natural* fruit of study and logic, though both serve as ushers, introducing us to the antechamber of faith, when helped by grace. Neither is the intellect alone engaged in the process : the *will* is the faculty mainly concerned in *submitting* to the known truth. The evidence for religious truth is not such as to make it *impossible* to refuse assent. And when the natural man is deeply interested in not embracing the truth, owing to the earthly disadvantages of doing so which he sees in the offing, his will can stimulate the intellect into great activity in finding reasons against believing, or at least against *submitting*, and cause it to magnify out of all proportion mere straws of objections.

While in this weak and more or less insincere state of mind, the inquirer will eagerly seize upon any scrap of a difficulty or argument, some unproved assertion of a controversialist, some purely sentimental consideration, some literary or æsthetic preference—anything, in fact—and build it up into an unanswerable reason for not doing what naturally he does not want to do. Yet all the while a warning keeps rising up within him—like a ghost of Banquo—reproaching him for the murder of his conscience.

Help from the Lord.

How much light is needed to see through all the subtle fallacies of self-love, how much strength to repress the rebellion of flesh and

blood, or how much courage to break with forms of wrong which one knows to be incompatible with an honest profession of the Catholic Faith! "Destruction is thy own, O Israel! Thy help is from Me."[1] "I have lifted up my eyes to the mountain, from whence help shall come to me. My help is from the Lord, Who made Heaven and earth. May He not suffer thy feet to be moved."[2] Prayer, then, for the light and for strength is the first and essential step for the inquirer. Many a soul now sleeping peacefully upon the bosom of Mother Church has cause to say with grateful heart: "If the Lord had not been with us, when men rose up against us, perhaps they had swallowed us up alive. . . . Our souls have passed through a torrent: perhaps our soul had passed through water intolerable!"[3]

2. Recourse to a priest.

But our inquirer is waiting to learn what is the first *outward* step towards informing himself more fully about the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. The answer is not far to seek. If I want to know about music, I go to the trained musician; if about law, to the man of the law, who has made a special study of it. Similarly, if I want information about the Catholic religion, good sense suggests my seeking out one whose office it is to explain it to others. That person is obviously a Catholic priest. In my timidity, perhaps I prefer to call first at some Catholic friend's—as a sort of half-way house. But in the end I shall need expert instruction from a priest.

The "other side."

"But the priest is certain only to present things from the Catholic point of view. Ought I not rather to consult my own clergyman?

"My Vicar, knowing that I am veering Romewards, has, in fact, pressed me to go to him and listen to the other side of the question." The

[1] Osee xiii. 9. [2] Ps. cxx. 1. [3] Ps. cxxiii. 5.

other side! Why, man or woman alive! What have you been doing all these past years but *seeing* that "other side"? You have seen it at close quarters, too, and the result does not appear to have been over-satisfying, or you would not have done such violence to your former habits of mind and the associations of years as to take the Catholic Church into consideration. On the contrary, the "other side" now claiming a turn of your attention is not that represented by the minister of a religion which, after long trial, you have found wanting. So far, possibly, you have seen *that* side only through the coloured glasses of speakers or writers who, if not plainly its enemies, at least cannot reasonably be supposed to favour it—not if they are sincere in their own religious creed. You would not go to a man's professed enemy for a true estimate of his merits precisely in the point which is the cause of their rivalry.

A retort.

You say, perhaps, that I am asking you to do this very thing in referring you to a Catholic priest. He on his side, you urge, is sure to be hostile to your Vicar's religion. Seemingly a home thrust, but in truth it is a fallacy. For you are not referred to the Catholic priest for information about your Vicar's faith, but about the one in which the priest is a specialist. So, too, when I want to know about the beliefs of Anglicans, I consult Anglican authorities.

The promise "to wait."

"My Vicar wants me to promise him not to take any steps for another twelvemonth." Has your Vicar made all arrangements with the Angel of Death not to intrude his attentions upon you meanwhile? But apart from this, what right have you to make any such promise? If your attraction towards the Church is a temptation, then the promise that *should* be asked for is that you will resist it for good and all. But if it is

the voice of God calling you to His true religion, then on what principle can you settle to keep His Holy Spirit waiting for the arbitrary term of a year? And if it is rash haste that your Vicar fears, he may be quite at peace on that score. The priest will see to that.

"I must not intrude."

You have another difficulty, perhaps. You shrink from taking the liberty of intruding upon the priest without an introduction—or even with one—being a stranger to him. What business have you—you urge—to trespass upon the priest's valuable time, having, as a mere outsider, no claim on his leisure?

The priest a professional man.

Have you any scruple about consulting a doctor without an introduction, or acquaintance? No, because by living in a doctor's house, as the brass plate proclaims to all and sundry, the physician plainly declares it to be his special business and desire to see anyone who wishes to consult him. There is a difference, no doubt. The M.D. will ask for a fee (small blame to him, if it be a reasonable one), whereas the priest will neither ask nor expect a farthing for dealing with your case. When real spiritual business is meant by the caller, apologies for "troubling" a priest—though well-meant—are out of place. And if through human weakness—which is not confined to the laity—he considered an apology due, he would doubtless recognize his error in moments of quiet self-examination.

A priest's business.

For whose benefit was he priested? Assuredly not for his own, however beneficial the grace and honourable the dignity conferred upon him in Holy Orders. He is in his presbytery for nothing else but to help souls redeemed by the Blood of his Divine Master. True, his flock have the first claim on his care and leisure. But, as in the case of the Good Shepherd, whose pastoral office he is pledged to continue, there are "other sheep who

are not of the fold," and these also he must bring, that there may be "one fold and one shepherd."[1]

Female decorum

Perchance you are of the female sex, and young enough to think it unusual—even in these emancipated days—to visit a priest alone: and your business is such that you would not care to expose it before a witness. It may even be that, "for fear of the Jews"—or, more likely, of the "Jewesses"—you are obliged to go to the Catholic priest, like Nicodemus to Christ, "by night"—that is, alone and secretly.

Convince yourself that there is nothing the least unusual in such a course. It is done all over England and elsewhere, every day of the week, by non-Catholic women, young and elderly, who have to protect themselves from bigoted meddling. Regard a Catholic presbytery as being—what it really is—a truly public place of resort. When you have become acquainted with one, you will change your present conception of it, and begin to pity the priest for being able to secure so little privacy in his only home. He has no place of business, as distinct from his residence. He is, in fact, at the beck and call of his people in all their troubles and trials, by night as well as by day, and out among them in all seasons and weathers administering to the sick and dying.

However, should your shyness get the better of your courage, there is nothing to prevent your taking some trusty friend along with you to diminish the fearsomeness of bearding the sacerdotal lion in his den for the first time. The plan is not likely to last long; for, although the priest will have no objection to instructing two people at the same time, it is more than likely you will soon dislike it, even if your chaperon does not.

"The spider and the fly."

There yet remains another pitfall to be avoided by the inquirer. This is perhaps the form in

[1] John x. 16.

which it presents itself: "I have heard that the fate of the fly in the fable is bliss itself compared to that of the non-Catholic who trusts himself within the crafty spider-web of a 'Romish' priest, or, still worse, a *Jesuit* priest. Before you know where you are, and whether you will it or not, you find yourself sworn in the subject of the Pope. And once within the clutches of Popery—wriggle as you may—no escape is possible. It is a sort of hypnotism."

The money scare.

Or, again: "My husband is greatly opposed to my becoming a Catholic. Not that he's the *least bigoted*, you know! He says that as for my 'turning,' that's *my* affair, if I'm such a—pardon the expression——fool as to become a Papist. But he declares he doesn't intend the Jesuits to get hold of *his* money if *he* knows it!"

Wanted: common sense.

Now let us take these impressions and look at them in the light of common sense, and then of sober fact. Is it not a sign of overweening self-valuation on my part to imagine that a communion which counts some 230,000,000—or, as some reckon, 260,000,000—is going to be so greatly enriched by acquiring me as to think it worth while to kidnap me against my will? Can it be to the interest of a Christian body which is certainly militant, and, according to many, too aggressively so, to "press-gang" unwilling recruits? The Catholic Church is, at all events, a spiritual society proposing to its members an exceptionally definite and somewhat exacting standard of interior life. How could the latter be procured without the free concurrence of the *wills* of those who are to *conform* to it? In past times a government could physically compel the reluctant into its navy and subdue them into discipline by force, trusting that the greater number would become attached to the roving life, with its occasional licence ashore in times of

peace and its loot or prize-money in time of war—while deserters knew that the lash or the yard-arm awaited them. But no power on earth can, and not even Divine grace will, make a Catholic against his free consent.

Ask those who have done it.

But now for the facts. They may be called such without begging the question at issue, because they can be so easily tested by appealing to any neighbour who has gone through the process of being instructed and received into the Catholic Church. These will bear witness that they were soon made aware of their true position; that admission into the Fold was proposed to them as a thing to be sought for by them for their own soul's sake, and not as a benefit to the Church; that Catholic priests decline to admit converts till they are, in their judgment, ripe for that grace, however much the candidates themselves would fain hasten on the event. (Possibly, such judgments have sometimes been too hastily formed—for to err is human—and sad relapses may have been the consequence. But this does not affect the *principle* of priestly conduct, just referred to.) Converts will testify that no senseless attempt was made to force them into the Church against their wills—indeed, there are always two to a bargain. A priest who hustled people through the gates of the Church, *knowing* them to be unconvinced and unfit, would charge his soul with a very grave responsibility, for which a severe account would be one day demanded of him.

But now about the husband's theory that the reception of his lady into the Church will enable "priests and Jesuits" to get hold of his money. All this is the product of an exuberant, anti-clerical fancy. If the husband will only think the matter out in the business-like way in which he does *other* things, he will find his theory somewhat unworkable. Let him ask himself *how* his

money is to be spirited away into sacerdotal pockets without his knowing it, or being able to check the leakage, either by direct or indirect means.

The writer once had it from a convert that when her Evangelical relations twitted her about "paying for absolution," and she assured them good-humouredly that in her day-book no such entry occurred as, "To Father Cuthbert, for absolution of six sins at 5s., £1 7s. 6d. (discount on quantity)," she was met by the resourceful answer: "Ah! we dare say you don't *know*, but be sure the priests get it *somehow*." With mentality of this sort it is impossible to cope, except one have the high qualifications of a consulting doctor to a Bedlam!

No doubt the lady, when received into the Church, will do her moderate duty of supporting its worship, as presumably she formerly did worship of another kind. She will do so out of her own means, or, if she have none, at all events the husband must know if she avail herself of his.

Shall be no credit to the Church.

There is, however, a difficulty of an opposite kind. A person contemplating entry into the Catholic Church, so far from imagining that he is going to benefit her, may, on the contrary, conceive so high an idea of her spiritual standards as to *despair of ever becoming a credit to her*. "I could never be good enough for a Catholic. Had I been brought up to it from childhood I might have had a chance. But it is too late now!"

Now, it would be foolish to deny that people blessed with the Faith from their earliest years, though *without any merit of their own*, have been given a big start in the race for Christian holiness. But, as often happens in field sports, those who are severely handicapped at the start soon forge ahead of more favoured competitors. This is also verified not unfrequently in the case of converts. The *very fact* of the high idea they

have formed of the spiritual life proposed by the Church, and their keen sense of the need to make up for lost time, stimulates their fervour, and results in their outstripping what are called "born Catholics"—though no one is *born* in the Catholic Faith, but only in Original Sin. One may here distinguish between growth in holiness and the acquisition of perfect "at-home-ness" in Catholic customs, modes of thought, and speech.

Accidental differences.

In this last respect there may be noticeable differences between convert and convert—differences sometimes due to the more advanced period of life in which the grace of the True Faith has been granted, or the short time elapsed since reception. Much, too, depends upon character. Some characters are more malleable than others. It is the same as with clothes. The garment may be a perfect fit from the first, or it may need several alterations, or even when satisfactorily finished, may—according to its texture—take some time in adapting itself perfectly to the person.

But this "at-home-ness," though more pleasing both to the convert and to his newly found brethren, is relatively unimportant as compared with the interior spiritual discipline which, in the case of more robust souls, may even be quickened, rather than delayed, by the humiliation and mortification of feeling somewhat singular.

And this singularity itself will soon dwindle into quite insignificant proportions if the convert has the good sense and simplicity to learn from other exemplary Catholics, and to take in good part any hints that may be candidly offered.

Courage!

No would-be Catholic has any reason to be discouraged. The essence of Catholicity does not lie in assimilating perfectly outward forms and expressions, but in the moulding of the spirit according to the mind of the Catholic Church,

and in regulating moral conduct in conformity with her Divinely assisted reading of the Ten Commandments, and with her own laws—made in Christ's name and in virtue of His authority. Whatever difficulty the neophyte may find in the beginning, this will be soon diminished, and eventually smoothed away by constant use of those powerful aids to human weakness—prayer, the Sacraments, and the Holy Sacrifice. The unlimited store of spiritual light and vigour which these means of grace contain can hardly be imagined by the outsider until experience has proved it. Hardly—for it would be too much to say that no non-Catholic has imagined it. For, as priests well know, it is this very notion—with the bright hope it offered of victory over besetting moral weakness—that has brought not a few souls into the Fold. And yet it is true that the saving, transforming virtue of Sacraments—especially of frequent reception of the true Body and Blood of the Divine Healer—needs to be actually experienced in order to be *fully* appreciated. *Expertus potest credere.*

Conclusion.

All this time we have been endeavouring to get behind that "No Thoroughfare" placard in Ilchester High Street, and to thread our way through the numerous obstructions which barred access to the old-established inn, "The Ark." Forward, then, honest inquirer! Do not fear to trust yourself within its portals, if only to ascertain the terms and the sort of accommodation and fare it has to offer you after your weary and bewildered wanderings. May it be given you to receive there, as so many others in a similar plight have received before you, such care and healing from the wounds of years as the waylaid traveller from Jerusalem to Jericho was happy enough to meet with in the hostelry to which the Good Samaritan so tenderly bore him!

CHAPTER II

AT THE GATE

Waiting.

You have passed, dear reader, the stage of mere inquiry. You no longer view the Church of Christ doubtfully or from afar, but are standing now at the very gate of the Fold, anxiously, if not at all times joyfully, awaiting admittance. The term of instruction, though perhaps not wholly ended, is drawing to a close. The great foundation of that doctrinal building, which has risen up by the joint labour and prayer of teacher and pupil, has long since been well and truly laid —I mean the intimate conviction of faith, produced by God's grace, that the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church is the *one only* true Church of Jesus Christ, empowered by Him to mark out unerringly, to you and to all, the sure road to Heaven. What yet remains to be done is no more than like finishing the roof and putting in the window-frames.

A few days, and the gate will open wide. You will enter in at last with your retractation of error which may have been inculpable on your part, with the profession of entire Catholic Faith upon your lips, with the water of Holy Baptism fresh upon your brow, and your soul cleansed from every stain of sin.

Yes ! you know all this, and the prospect would bring you nothing but joy were it not for the dread you have of your First Confession.

The First Confession.

You do *not* dread it? Then, you belong to the happy few to whom Confession seems a welcome outlet to their long pent-up consciences. But in the case of the larger number who are oppressed by the thought of having to make known to a human being weaknesses of poor human nature hitherto known to God alone—even though under the safest of secrecies—the following reflections may help considerably to mitigate the trial, or rather the *prospect* of it. Those already at the gate have, in spite of natural repugnance, bravely determined to face the ordeal. For they now recognize, with those millions of Catholic Englishmen who lived before the so-called "Reformation," that Confession is an institution of Christ Himself, the condition for His pardon; and as they may not dictate the terms of reconciliation to Him Whom they have in weakness offended, they are prepared, in spite of the cost to self, for a humble, sincere avowal of whatever guilt they may have incurred. What a precious offering to that "meek and humble Heart" that has watched their every footstep and led them by its light and grace into the sheepfold! The contrite and humble heart He will not despise.

Three anxieties.

But this act seems to present great difficulty to the inexperienced penitent, however much he may wish to do his duty. (1) There is that painful searching into the past, in the new light which the instructions received may cast upon the morality of actions. (2) Then it seems impossible to recall every past error of thought, and word, and deed. (3) Then, again, there is the difficulty of marshalling the faults and expressing them correctly and without omissions to the confessor.

Not as bad as it seems.

Now, each of these difficulties is apt to assume exaggerated proportions in the nervous appre-

hension of the catechumen. A few words, therefore, about each of them.

1. Here is a certain principle which may lighten considerably the burden of self-examination: The convert is only bound to confess *grievous* or —as they are technically called—" mortal " sins, understanding the term in the sense that must have been explained during instruction. Therefore, the penitent is by no means bound to recall every little vanity, untruthfulness, impatience, uncharitableness, etc., of which he or she may have been guilty in the past. It is enough to be *sorry* for all.

1. Only *mortal* sins need to be told.

2. The new light received from the moral teaching of the Church will have a bearing on the *future* responsibility of the convert, but cannot affect the responsibility of past actions, nor, consequently, the obligation to confess them. The *guilt* and *degree* of guilt before God of those past thoughts, desires, words, acts, or omissions of duty depended upon the light which their author had *at the time of acting*, and not upon the greater and truer light which has recently been received. As a rule, even the otherwise educated non-Catholic under instruction is wont to lament the fact that hitherto no one has ever given him or her any *precise* moral teaching at all. How often one has heard : " In the Church of England we were mainly left to make things out for ourselves " ! Thus, the extremely clear and definite moral teaching given by the Catholic Church, through the priest, comes as a startling and welcome revelation. It is nearly all new to him. Now, it is evident that Almighty God does not judge us by standards of which we are in *bona-fide* ignorance. And it is only in as far as we see we are *responsible* for misdoing in His sight that we are obliged to make confession to the priest. This, however, may cut both ways, to some extent. Things which formerly we re-

2. Gravity judged by light had *at time of sinning.*

garded as very gravely wrong—say, reading a novel or playing cards for trifling stakes upon a Sunday—we find now to be no sin at all. But, on the other hand, certain passionate excesses which we thought wrong, indeed, but not *gravely* sinful, we may now know to be mortal sins. Again, commonly, if one asks a person under instruction whether *all* lies are grievous, the answer promptly comes : " Yes, are they not ?" When, however, one represents that a mortal sin exposes the sinner to eternal punishment, and then asks : " So you think that a child, for example, who tells a deliberate fib to escape a whipping will be punished in Hell if it dies before repenting ?" " Oh no, I don't !" is the equally prompt reply, common sense thus endorsing the Catholic distinction between mortal and venial sins. The same may occur with other points of morality. So that the rule is this : Whatever I thought *at the time I did it* to be *gravely* sinful—though, perhaps, the term " mortal " sin may have been unknown to me—that and no more am I obliged to tell the priest in order to satisfy my strict duty. I may laudably choose to do more, but I am not *bound* to more.

Forgotten in Confession.

Yet, even so, I may be over-anxious lest, in the nervousness of the moment, I should forget part of what I meant to tell in all sincerity, and so make a bad confession. Now, it is simply impossible for me to make a bad confession if I *mean* to tell all that I am *bound* to mention, and am, moreover, truly sorry for all, and resolved to avoid *mortal* sin in the future. What I have honestly forgotten to say, *no matter how grave its nature,* is forgiven along with what I tell when the priest gives me absolution.

Difficulty in explaining to priest.

3. As to fears about not being able to express yourself properly and completely. Any priest receiving a convert is fully aware of the difficulty,

He will generally take upon himself unasked the burden of "pulling you through"—that is to say, he will question you on the Commandments as far as he knows to be necessary, and all you will have to do is to answer him *truthfully*. Should he by any chance not offer to do this, thinking, perhaps, that you prefer to do it all by yourself, you have only to say, "Please, Father, will you help me?" and you may be quite sure he will see that you make a perfectly good confession. The amount of detail required in confessing faults, especially those against the (Catholic) Sixth and Ninth Commandments, *is very much less* than the convert might imagine. The priest knows exactly how far explicitness is obligatory, and will naturally reduce things to the lawful *minimum*.

The humiliation of it.

We come now to certain *moral* difficulties which Confession may present to the beginner.

These have been treated fully elsewhere,[1] but it seems advisable, for the completeness of the present volume, to repeat. We have already alluded to the humiliation involved in revealing hidden and, it may be, specially grievous sins. It will help to moderate our very natural repugnance if we remember that by sinning we have put *Our Blessed Lord* to shame before the powers of darkness, whose evil suggestions we followed instead of exercising the virtues practised and taught by Our Divine Master. Is it not fair, then, that we in turn should undergo some shame in reparation to His Sacred Heart, and as the price of His loving forgiveness? Another point is to realize the true attitude of the Catholic confessor in the matter.

The priest a "Father."

It would be wrong to look upon him as an accuser or as a stern judge. The penitent, urged by the command of Christ, is a voluntary *self-*

[1] *Letters on Christian Doctrine*, vol. i., pp. 246-248, 252-254, 372-374; vol. ii., pp. 294-296.

accuser, and the priest is bound to accept his avowals as true, whether they be in his favour or disfavour. The confessor is, it is true, also a spiritual judge, inasmuch as he has to hear the cause of sin and determine whether the penitent has the dispositions of heart needed for a sentence of pardon. But the office of *Father* predominates over that of Judge, and it is the priest's duty "to put on the Lord Jesus Christ," and exhibit the tenderness and delicacy of Christ in His treatment of repentant and self-accusing sinners. It is not his place to make what is already an arduous task for poor human nature harder still, but rather charitably to render it as easy as he can.

When "there is joy in Heaven upon a sinner doing penance" for his sins, should there be harshness on earth, as though the sins were there and then being *committed*, instead of being *repaired* and *atoned for?* Allowing for the fact that priests are men, and that long hours in a close confessional make heavy demands upon his self-control—even when in good health—I think the Catholic laity will be willing to testify to the gentle and fatherly character of the Catholic confessional.

"Priest too easy."

So much so, that probably the convert, after realizing this by experience, may be tempted to take an opposite view, and begin to think confessors too easy-going and indifferent to sin, because they listen to its acknowledgment, perhaps, without one word of rebuke or scolding. But—to turn to our Model—did not Our Blessed Lord act precisely in this way with the sinners, Magdalen, Peter, and the Good Thief—not to mention the poor woman taken in her sin? And He realized the outrage sin is upon the Majesty and Holiness of God as no creature possibly can! Not a word of reproach did He utter, any more

than did the prototype of Divine forgiveness set forth by Christ Himself — the father of the Prodigal Son.[1]

"What will he think?"

The next thought that may distress those unused to Confession is: "But what will the priest think of me when he hears my sad tale?" What will he think? Why, praised be God! Here is a brave soul determined to repair the past at any cost! "But surely he *must* despise me for my weakness!" This thought almost seems a relic of the "proud priest" delusion credulously fostered by anti-Catholic literature. The confessor does not sit in his confessional as on a throne of moral superiority, looking down in a spirit of self-righteousness on the erring creature at his feet. Despise you! He had better not, lest God allow him to fall even as you have done, or worse!

Meeting priest afterwards.

"At all events, I shall never be able to speak to him again!" Do not imagine that a priest has nothing better to do than think of what he has heard in Confession. It may not be easy for you to realize it, but, in the priest's mind, the secret confidences of the confessional, being—so to say—God's secret, belong so completely to another world as to have no connection with the daily intercourse of life. Whether this be the effect of training, or a grace attached to the priestly office, need not be discussed. It is the fact that matters, and that it is *felt* to be such in practice by Catholics will appear likely enough from a simple consideration. It is pretty generally granted by non-Catholics that Catholic priests are, as a body, on far easier terms with their people than ministers of other creeds, and more welcome visitors in their homes—of the poor and rich alike. Notice, also, that a very large number of Catholic Churches and missions in

[1] Luke xv. 11-32.

England and elsewhere have but one priest apiece to work them. It follows that in such missions the one priest is the depositary of most of the secrets of conscience in his parish. Now, if the effect of the confessor's knowledge were what you anticipate in your own case, it is evident that the priest would be the last person whom they would gladly welcome or consort with. You will find by experience that honest confession has no such unpleasant effects upon the social relations between confessor and penitent. If anything, it tends to strengthen the bond of sympathy between them. The priest becomes the most trusty, because the most trusted, of friends.

Such considerations as the above should go far towards reconciling the candidate for reception to the unaccustomed humiliation of open Confession. Still, one may grant that, at the best, it remains a certain trial to our self-love. But consider what a priceless boon it is, after all! What a signal mercy vouchsafed to sinful mortals, who have trifled with the baptismal innocence in which they were clothed in childhood, by the compassionate Heart of the Friend of Sinners! To think that a few short moments of shame can secure us eternal glory! That a brief humiliation can make the difference to us between eternal Heaven and eternal Hell! To think that the simple avowal of guilt to one bound to lifelong secrecy under every conceivable circumstance, followed by a sentence of complete pardon, can instantly efface from the register of the Recording Angel a whole life, if need be, of sin and depravity! How many poor souls there are, crushed to earth by bitter remorse for a worse than wasted life, that would give everything to know that so intolerable a load can be lifted in a moment from their shoulders, and that in every Catholic Church around them they have a certain means for re-

deeming years of utter wickedness and starting afresh with a new hope and a sinless conscience!

Let us not begrudge the payment of so small a price for such an unspeakable treasure. It is something to be able to say with fullest confidence, on leaving the confessional, that "as far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our iniquities from us."[1]

Another trouble may add not a little to the difficulty of full confession in the case of the female sex. "Is it not unseemly that a young woman should freely mention all her frailties to one who, albeit a priest, is still not of her own sex?" Sex difficulty

1. This difficulty often springs from an extravagant notion as to the degree of detailed explanation required for the performance of the penitent's duty. For, while, according to the teaching of the Council of Trent, all *mortal* sins must be told, not only in number (as far as *ordinary* care enables the person to remember), but also in kind, there is no obligation to mention minute details *within* the kind. To illustrate: It is a case of fully consenting to sensual imaginations against the Sixth Commandment. The penitent is neither required, nor would be permitted, to explain the subject of the imagination.

2. The above point being settled, let us further deal with the objection of impropriety, which may still seem to retain some of its force. We must fall back upon Catholic principles. Confession of sin to the priests of God is an ordinance *of Christ for all His followers*. Our acceptance of the infallible teaching authority of the Church includes our acceptance of this truth. Now, the same Church teaches that Christ was God, invested with all the attributes of God, consequently with Infinite Foreknowledge and Prudence. Hence He had ever present to His mind all future stages Christ knows all.

[1] Ps. ciii. 12.

of human society and the spiritual needs of all mankind in *both* its sexes. If, then, He arranged that His Church should assign the same conditions for confession to women as to men, it is not for us to imply that this arrangement of Christ is unbecoming. When medical help is required in sickness, no one thinks it unseemly to explain symptoms to the physician nor to submit to the unpleasantness of a surgical operation. Why is it, then, that the objection we are considering is only deemed valid when it is the sickness of our immortal soul that calls for treatment ? Yet the amount of explicitness as to bodily miseries which the doctor may require is far greater than that exacted by the confessor for healing the ailments of the soul and conscience. Moreover, the confessional-box, in its construction and in its obscurity, obviously screens and protects female modesty far more effectually than a medico's consulting-room or surgery. In the case of confession, too, the contact between confessor and penitent is only mental, and then—not to omit the chief thing—since the priest is deputed by Our Lord to perform so responsible a duty, he receives in the Sacrament of Orders the grace necessary for accomplishing his task with due reserve and delicacy. And as long as he is ordinarily faithful in his own spiritual life, this will be the best safeguard to decorum in the discharge of his office.

Child-like confidence.

The convert, therefore, while striving to invest his or her avowals of sin with both the qualities specified by the Church—namely, clearness combined, if need arise, with modesty of expression —should cultivate a spirit of simple, childlike confidence towards her spiritual father so as to be able to tell him anything whatever that burdens the conscience. Human nature being—as is obvious—more or less the same everywhere, it would be a mistake to imagine that the confessor

will be mightily surprised or show himself greatly "shocked" by any confidence that the penitent needs to impart for fulfilling the precept of Christ, or for the end of obtaining guidance amid dangers and difficulties. Is it not a blessing to have at least one friend in the world with whom to share life's temptations and trials, with the certainty that our secrets will be absolutely safe for ever, and the counsel given to us disinterested and honest?

Examination of conscience.

A word, now, about *examination of conscience*, which will serve as a guide in preparing for all confessions, and not merely for the one which (commonly) forms part of reception into the Church.

How far is this duty of searching for our sins binding? The Protestant Reformers urged against the Sacrament of Penance that it was "a butchery of the conscience." The Council of Trent condemns this charge as "impious." Yet, unless earnest souls exercise due *moderation*, as well as due *care*, in sifting their consciences, they are likely, through lack of discretion, to lend colour to the said impiety.

Underlying principle.

The position is this: We are bound by Christ's precept, as infallibly explained to us by His Church, to confess all *mortal* sins. We are *permitted*, and may be rightly *advised* (but not *obliged*) to tell venial sins—at least, the more notable ones—but our strict obligation is confined to *mortal* offences. In order to fulfil this duty, we must *remember* the sins, and therefore examination of conscience is only of obligation *in as far as it is a necessary means for reminding us of our sins*. Now, if I know by experience that I seldom sin mortally, still more if mortal sin is a very rare event in, or, by God's mercy, entirely absent from, my life, it is clear that, had I chanced to commit one since my last, perhaps quite recent, confession, this sad misfortune would be so clearly before my mind that no searching of con-

science could be necessary. Hence, in the case of devout persons who are careful to shun mortal sin, and who are never absent from confession for more than a week or two, the *duty* of set self-examination is of the slightest, if it can be said to exist at all. That being so, the spending of a long time in examination before Confession is, for such persons as I have described, an unnecessary piece of self-torture. It is, indeed, a useful act of free virtue to keep a watchful eye over our venial faults and imperfections, also; it is even necessary for real advancement in Christian holiness. But to do this under a sense of coercion, as if otherwise my confession would be unworthy, is an error, and, for naturally anxious minds, positively harmful. In their case it is far better to foster a general spirit of humble sorrow for their manifold defects and weaknesses, coupled with a loving confidence in Our Compassionate Lord.

Those prone to mortal sin.

But let us suppose that a person is not at all free from mortal sin, that he is struggling against some habit of sin, contracted in non-Catholic days, and perhaps only become known as *grievously* wrong in the course of instruction. Such a one *will* need—for a time, at least—to examine himself on the point. The question remains: What *amount* of diligence is he bound to bring to this task? He has, let us suppose, carried on his search for ten minutes, and feels that he has found all his sins. Must he continue indefinitely on the chance that further search will yield new discoveries? By no means. It is a general principle of Catholic teaching that, in observing positive ordinances, one is bound to take *ordinary* care, as one would in any other matter of serious importance, but not *extraordinary* or excessive care. The same principle applies, for instance, to the law of hearing Mass on Sundays and Days of Obligation. The person who can only get to

a Catholic church by taking a railway journey, or by walking four or five miles, is certainly not bound to fulfil the law, though it would be advisable and meritorious if he did this, as, thank God ! many a Catholic in England, Scotland, Ireland, and elsewhere, is generously willing to do. So, to go back to the examination of conscience, once the person sees no *solid reason* for supposing that a few minutes' more search would reveal a *fresh mortal* sin, he is free from all further obligation to examine.

The more important thing.

Far more important is it to devote ample time to exciting oneself to sorrow for one's sins, and to a true purpose of amendment. For while sins unintentionally omitted are forgiven by absolution along with those actually confessed, no sin is ever pardoned except its author repent : and repentance includes both sorrow for the past and virtuous determination for the future.

The Leap in the Dark.

A "time of clouds."

Our next topic shall be a severe mental trial which many a convert nearing reception has to face and overcome. After the first struggle with self over visiting a priest at the start, things soon became easier. The convert began to feel more at home, the light thrown on the truths of faith began to dispel previous darkness, and at length full conviction took possession. The result was a welcome sense of rest and finality after disturbance and doubt. But as soon as the time comes for forming the final resolution *to be received*, the light seems suddenly to go out, and the soul finds itself once more enveloped in darkness, and a prey to vague misgivings as to the rightfulness of the momentous step contemplated. Besides being tormented by such thoughts as, " What if it is all a delusion ?" " Am I better than

my fathers, who deemed Anglicanism or Dissent good enough for them?" "Is not the Real Presence a very 'hard saying,' and Confession beyond human endurance?" and the like, the poor soul begins to realize more vividly the cost to flesh and blood, the bigoted attacks and ridicule, or, it may be, the honest grief of relatives and life-long friends who know no better; the social "boycott," the risk of temporal loss, and every sort of painful anticipation. The kindly sunshine of God's countenance no longer pierces "the encircling gloom" of which the great Oratorian Cardinal wrote.

A lesson from the Magi.

Something of the sort must have befallen those three wise chieftains, or Magi, from the East, who, seeing in the wondrous star a summons to the cradle of the new-born King, brushed aside the protests of kith and kin, and the carpings of sceptics, and started off in search of Jesus. Yet, as they advanced on their journey and drew nigh to the City of Peace, the star they had followed with such faith and constancy must have suddenly vanished from the heavens, for their eager inquiries at Jerusalem showed that their astral guide had failed them. The priests of Jerusalem proved indifferent and callous concerning the object of their quest. And so, too, the Catholic priest, to try the convert's constancy and purity of motive, may sometimes show himself less concerned about his spiritual welfare than in the beginning, when all was new and hard to him, and he stood in greater need of encouragement and sympathy. But the wise men never faltered in their purpose, and God rewarded their faith and perseverance, for, as they doggedly pressed onwards, "behold the star which they had seen in the east went before them, until it stood over where the Child was."[1] The blessed light had

[1] Matt. ii. 9.

returned in all its pristine brightness, and they then knew that God had not allowed them to be deceived. So, dear convert, will it be with you, if, in your hour of darkness, you do but cling steadfastly to the truth that "He is faithful Who hath called you."[1]

"Expect the Lord, do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord."[2]

Light and peace will return.

If the star should not return ere you reach the despised stable of the Catholic Church, it will surely burst forth in all its peaceful splendour once you have humbly knelt at the feet of Jesus, in the person of His unworthy minister, and have passed through the gateway of formal reception. Then at length you will find "the Child" indeed, where He wills to be always found—"with Mary His Mother," and with deep thankfulness you will present to Jesus your heart's offerings, all the more precious in the sight of the Son and of the Mother for being obtained at the cost of a painful struggle, though chiefly by the aid of His wonderful grace.

How marvellous is this grace of conversion to the Faith! To speak humanly, considering all the hindrances and pitfalls besetting the path of the most single-minded inquirer into the Faith of Old England, the wonder is not that the very substantial roll of annual conversions should not be still larger, but rather that there should be any conversions at all. One needs to live in a non-Catholic land in order to have so many opportunities for touching with one's fingers, as it were, the most astonishing triumphs of Divine grace and leading. It is as though the Holy Spirit of Jesus, "exulting" once more "like a giant to run His way," took His Divine pleasure in levelling with a breath the mountainous obstacles which shut in the soul of the sincerest seeker after His truth, and appear to render the penetration of His light a sheer impossibility!

[1] 1 Thess. v. 24. [2] Ps. xxvi. 14.

CHAPTER III

WITHIN THE FOLD

"*Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light*" (1 Pet. ii. 9).

A Catholic at last!

THE convert has passed safely through the trying time of instruction and mental struggle. The rejection of such heresy as he may have been guilty of, and the solemn profession of Catholic faith and submission to the Vicar of Christ, has been pronounced; Baptism (probably), either in its absolute or its conditional form, has been received, the ordeal of the first Confession is over, and far less painfully than was anticipated, and the sheep of Christ rests securely within the "One Fold" in the arms of the Good Shepherd. So far so good. But now that a new life has been begun, it is all important that it be started on the right lines. Some remarks, therefore, may be helpful concerning

THE SPIRIT OF A TRUE CONVERT.

1. Humility of mind.

The primary element in this true spirit would seem to be Humility, and from this root will spring two other necessary qualities—namely, Docility and Thankful Content.

The position of a convert is plainly that of a beginner, a novice in the Catholic art. If it be necessary to become "like little children" in

order to enter Our Lord's Kingdom, it is equally necessary to continue childlike in order to get properly acclimatized there. The Humility here spoken of is one of mind and cast of thought rather than of words and actions. The neophyte has by God's mercy found the Divinely appointed teacher of Christianity, "the Mother and Mistress of all the Churches," and his or her proper place is at her *feet*, listening as she unfolds the wonders and beauties of her Christ-given message to mankind.

The disciple "is not above his master," and should grasp the fact that he has come to *learn*, and not to teach, and, moreover, that there is very much yet to be learnt—far more than can be crowded into a course of preparatory instructions. And even though every detail of Catholic life had been fully discussed, the *spirit* of Catholicism has yet to be drunk in and assimilated. For this time is needed: mere book-work will not do it. The gift of faith has been received, but it has still to be excited into fuller and fuller activity by means of prayer, and, above all, by Sacraments. This perfecting of faith is in a special sense the function of that most Divine of all the Seven Sacraments, the Holy Eucharist, the appointed nourisher of the Divine life of the soul.

2. Docility.

But if much has still to be learnt, the learner needs a large fund of docility or "teachableness," according to that word of Scripture: "They shall be taught of God," or, more literally, they shall be "*teachable* of God." By this it is not meant that they must be clever and quick at learning, but rather conscious of their need to learn and willing to be taught. It is not a question of natural cleverness, but of *grace*, which is plentifully bestowed upon the humble of heart.

Good-bye to instruction.

It would therefore be a grave mistake for recent converts to take the view that, once they have been instructed for reception and been admitted into the Fold, they can thenceforth dispense with sermons, public catechisms, such as are given in church, and with books of instruction. This will appear all the more foolish when one reflects that even those who have made religion a life study are continually discovering fresh aspects of the same.

Learning from fellow-Catholics.

Nor should this docility be confined to the official teaching of priests. There ought also to be a humble readiness to learn as much as possible *from fellow-Catholics* who are fervent in the practice of their faith. An occasional hint or good-natured joke at the expense of one's mistakes, or unfamiliarity with things Catholic, should not be viewed as an insult or unkindness, but gratefully welcomed as a golden opportunity for catching the right notion about them.

"Chaff."

Sometimes it may happen that converts are found fault with or "chaffed" by *less observant* Catholics without reason. They are told that they are "too scrupulous," "too strait-laced." Here some caution is needed. The criticism, though made by one who does not appear to be at all a model of Catholic correctness, may still be true; also, it may not. The thing criticized may only be a proof of the convert's praiseworthy anxiety to avoid the smallest fault, and to seize every opportunity for increasing his store of grace. In a case like this it is best to consult the spiritual director, or else some Catholic of long standing, who is conspicuous for exemplary life. Thus the convert will provide for the possibility that the criticism was due to jealousy on the part of the less fervent Catholic at feeling shamed by the greater exactness of a mere tyro in the Faith.

As a rule, the earnest convert *is* a trifle over-

strict. This is inseparable, almost, from the natural crudity of his ideas. Thus, it is sometimes said that Saints are uncomfortable people to get on with, to which it is replied that such discomfort is not the fruit of finished sanctity, but rather of sanctity *in the making*. On a lower plane, the same seems true of convert strictness. The new Catholic does not, and cannot be expected to, grasp all at once the genius of Catholicism. And it would be dangerous for him to attempt deliberately to knock off all his corners from the beginning. The chances are that, in the process, a good deal that ought to be retained would be knocked away at the same time. The "golden mean" can only be reached gradually and spontaneously. So, here again, humility will come in to reconcile the novice to being considered "new at it."

Content.

In what sense does Content belong to the spirit of a true convert?

In this sense—that he should enter the Church of Christ with a mind made up *to be pleased with all he finds there*. Does this mean that in those things, at least, which form no necessary part of the Faith, there can be no defect nor room for improvement? Not at all. What it means is that the newly received member is not the person to suggest reforms. Nay, he is not the person to criticize at all. He is a *learner*, as we have seen, and not a critic. We read in Mgr. Bougaud's admirable *Life of St. Vincent de Paul* that on one occasion the Saint, who had a powerful voice in the selection of French Bishops, received a letter from a certain religious begging to be appointed to a bishopric. The writer explained that he had a talent for preaching, but found the fasts observed in his Order too severe for his delicate health. If he were made Bishop, he would no longer be obliged to observe them, and at

the same time his position would enable him to use his talent with great profit to souls. The answer of the inflexible consultor to the "Council of Conscience" was a model of tact, mingled with gentle irony. He said, amongst other things: "I do not doubt that your reverence would do great things in the episcopate if you were called to it by God. . . . But if His Providence called you to a Bishop, it is not to yourself that He would apply. He would rather put it into the hearts of those in whose power it is to appoint persons to ecclesiastical office and dignities." Whence it appears that this far-seeing Saint had little patience with self-appointed missions and reforms.

It would be both idle and ungenerous to deny the benefits which have accrued to the Catholic body through the infusion of new blood, due to the accession of converts. But the good done by them to the Catholic cause, in various branches of activity, has not been, for the most part, due to their own initiative, but to their merits being recognized by authority, and their being invited by the same to take part in a movement or a reform. Till that invitation came, they effaced themselves, and were content to live in unobtrusive thankfulness for the blessings which conversion had brought them.

Utopian dreams.

One of the causes of unrest and growing discontent in a convert to Catholicism is the rude shattering of some over-poetic ideal which he or she had formed as to what he would find in the new religious home. Every Catholic would be brimming over with an enthusiastic fervour, every Bishop and priest would prove a Saint, only needing to die in order to be inscribed straightway on the roll of the blessed. There would prevail everywhere a perfect union of charity such as we usually ascribe to the first Christians (in spite of the dissensions deplored and rebuked by

St. Paul), in spite, too, of Church history. There were to be no jealousies, quarrels, contentions, "nor any such thing," and his entry into the Fold would be marked by a gathering of all the faithful, who would shed tears of joy over the sheep that had been lost, but was found. In a word, it was a vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem, of the Church triumphant and perfected in Heaven, which had laid hold of his imagination, and not of the Church militant on earth still wrestling with the effect of Original Sin.

A necessary distinction.

The radical error here is that of not discriminating between the *aim* of the Church and the *inherent efficacy of the means* with which Christ has furnished her for its attainment, on the one hand, and, on the other, the dread power possessed by man's will for insufficiently using, or wholly neglecting, these aids to holiness. Attention to the Catholic doctrine on the relations between grace and free-will would have spared our convert the pain of disillusionment. Other Church teachings might have saved him. The doctrine of Purgatory, for one—not to mention the preaching of Eternal Punishment—pointed clearly to the fact that all Catholics were not likely to be Saints on earth.

A rare example.

The exceptional spiritual condition in an Indian settlement revealed by a remark of a poor Indian servant-girl, attending a mission a few years since in the city of Mexico, must be regarded, not, indeed, as unique in the history of the Church, but, still, as an ideal seldom realized. This chosen soul and pilgrim to Our Lady of Guadalupe, on hearing preachers so constantly denouncing sin and setting forth its punishments, exclaimed: "Sin, sin—they talk of nothing except sin here! In my village they only speak to us about loving Jesus and Mary!"

While pursuing an Utopia, our scandalized re-

cruit is like to miss a point which will go far by way of compensation—namely, that the quality of religion in the best specimens produced by the Church is far higher than that of the best produced elsewhere. This may be seen even in the laity. It is particularly noticeable in Catholic nuns. Imitations outside the Roman communion are hardly colourable; they are incapable of deceiving the Catholic eye.

Not all are heroes.

Just as in the army and navy not all are Wellingtons or Nelsons, so in the Church not all are Saints and heroes. In different ages and in different portions of the world the standard of actual practice among clergy and people has greatly varied. Yet the standard *proposed* by the Church has remained unlowered, and the aids for its attainment have remained unaltered and unweakened. Even the dark time of the Western Schism had its St. Vincent Ferrer, not to mention many other very holy souls.

Profitable reflections.

The main thing for a convert to consider is that, presumably, he did not seek admission into the Catholic Church because all its members would be living up to her lofty standards, but only because he *personally* had a soul to save and sanctify, and realized that the true religion of Jesus Christ could alone show him the way, and supply him with the necessary means.

The true position: "God and I."

If I am to avoid being a mere creature of circumstance, I must realize that the question of religion and salvation is primarily a *personal* affair between God and my own individual soul. Religion is the due payment by me of the debt of praise, reverence, and service to my God and Creator, Who made me individually. Salvation is the reward which I am personally to receive for the fulfilment of this my obligation. To slacken, therefore, in my service, or to refuse to yield it upon the lines which I have come to see are those

laid down by Christ, merely because others, who ought to, do not adhere faithfully to those lines, would surely be obeying sentiment rather than reason and common sense. It is not the soul of my neighbour that should form the first object of my zeal, but my own and only one! "God and I" sums up the true position during life, as it will be the position after death, when I shall stand alone before my all-seeing Judge to give an account of *myself*.

Vitality of Catholic faith

So far, we have supposed that the analysis made by our disappointed convert of the religious atmosphere into which he has entered was correct, and not made with superficial haste. But he has probably rushed too quickly to unfavourable conclusions. Longer experience and closer acquaintance with the lives of Catholics will doubtless show him how much more real and powerful than he imagined is the hold which religion has even upon the less exemplary among his newly found brethren. Of those who have abandoned their Faith there is less need to speak. Faith is a pure gift of God, and may be trifled with and lost. Yet how many of those who *seem* to have discarded their religion return to it repentantly when the approach of death lays bare the deceits of this world! The intense vitality of the Faith, when so much has been done to kill it, is noticeable even in such cases. It is seen still more clearly in Catholics who are merely careless. But in both classes there still survives the inner conviction that the Catholic religion is the only one worth caring for—that beside it there can be no other. Will our convert find this frame of mind equally prevalent in any other form of Christian profession? And yet there are not a few who, after falling away from Anglicanism or Dissent, turn when life is ebbing *not* to their original creed, but to the Catholic

Church, for help and support in that dread hour. On the other side, it is practically unknown that anyone who has been formerly a professing Catholic cares to have the attendance of a non-Catholic minister at his deathbed. It is equally unknown, moreover, that an apostate Catholic has ever done much religious credit to Protestantism in any of its forms.

The moral of all this may best be expressed in St. Paul's advice to Timothy: "Take heed to thyself and doctrine: be earnest in them. For in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." Whatever others may be, see that you, at all events, become a good Catholic. Thus you will provide for your own soul—which is the first consideration—and do good to others as well, not through their "hearing" you—for you have no commission to preach to them—but through the silent eloquence of your good example. Your earnestness will influence the lax all the more when they reflect upon the great disadvantage at which you began your religious life. This work of bringing others to Our Lord by spreading the "good odour of Christ," through personal holiness, is a form of apostolate which everyone can take up without any detriment to humility.

Thankfulness.

One might sum up all that has been said about the proper spirit for a convert under the single head of Thankfulness. "And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein you are called in one body, and be ye *thankful*."[1] Such is the counsel given by the Apostle to his Colossian converts. They were to be filled with gratitude to God for the peace they had found in the truth and for being called by the Divine mercy into the unity of Christ's mystic body, the Church. Similarly, to the converts of Ephesus: "Speaking

[1] Col. iii. 15.

to yourself in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody to the Lord; *giving thanks* always *for all things*, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father."[1]

The priceless boon.

No small gratitude, surely, is due, my dear convert, to the loving Heart of Jesus for vouchsafing the signal blessing of His true Faith to you, rather than to ten thousand others around you, who, perchance, would have made a better return for Its goodness than you have so far done, or—as perhaps Our Lord foresees—than you will ever do.

Gratitude will safeguard the spirit of quiet humility. For the truly grateful heart is generally a humble one, while thanklessness for favours received betokens a proud reluctance to being indebted to others, or else a swollen self-esteem that views all benefits conferred as falling far short of its merits.

Gratitude for the rich treasures contained in the True Church will check all tendency to criticize, and prove an unfailing source of interior contentment.

Illustration.

So the rescued captive, who for long years has known nothing but chains, and darkness, and want, when happily restored to home, finds everything and everybody greatly to his liking. In his deep thankfulness for deliverance, his house seems to him a very palace, mere liberty of movement a delightful luxury, and the most homely fare a banquet fit for a king.

The soul is worth it.

And if, my dear convert, in moments of harder trial from within or from without, you feel tempted to regret your entrance into the Fold, owing to the first pressure of sufferings which that step has entailed upon you, turn quickly in contrite self-reproach to the merciful Lord,

[1] Ephes. v. 19, 20.

Who called you from among ten thousand. Think of that man in the Gospel, who, having found a pearl of great price, sold "all that he had" to buy it. That is a figure of the sacrifices which God Incarnate deigned to make in order to purchase for you the jewels of the True Faith and true Sacraments, though need of you He had none. Let this serve to imprint upon your heart the corresponding lesson, that no sacrifice can be too heavy when made for the safety of your soul —so exorbitantly valued by Divine Love.

CHAPTER IV

STUMBLING-BLOCKS

UNDER this heading we may group together for convenience' sake, and in spite of their disconnection, a number of dangers, difficulties, and distresses which are apt to hamper the first years of a recent convert's religious life.

Indiscreet fervour.

Strange as it may seem to say so, fervour itself may have its dangers or inconveniences. Those who have naturally a very earnest, ardent, or impressionable character are prone to throw themselves too impulsively into the new life now laid open to them. All seems so new and inviting. To take one notable point. The realization of that one truth—the Real Presence of Our Lord in every Catholic tabernacle—may so penetrate the soul as to make hours of adoration in the church appear not merely a help and unfathomable delight, but even an imperative duty. As a convert once put it, when one first grasps the fact that Jesus, true God and true Man, is *really there*, the wonder is that every available Catholic is not lying prostrate on his face day and night before this mystery of ineffable love and condescension.

We should say that the real wonder is rather that God should have given Himself to us in this marvellous way on any less exacting conditions than the above. Obviously, no measure of worship and praise could be adequate. But just for this very reason we must look for some other

measure of conduct than the deserts of the Divine Object. That measure is our own condition as mortals, limited and circumscribed by the exigencies of our human life. Amongst these must be counted the needs of our *progressive* moral development. All growth, to be healthy, should be gradual, and in proportion as it is unduly accelerated by accident, it is less robust and lasting. The forced plant, the overgrown youth, are generally delicate. The same applies to the convert's growth in Catholicism.

Where danger lurks.

The danger to be feared from fervent excess in the beginning is this: While the neophyte is under the influence of the first glorious vista of the Catholic Church, while he is carried away by the newness of his joy, no amount of prayer, spiritual exercises, Masses, Benedictions, etc., seems excessive. Then, also, God often grants to the beginner for his encouragement a very Thabor of heavenly comfort. The infant needs milk, the older child more solid food. When the first impulse of fervour begins to cool, a reaction ensues. The convert begins to realize the moral and physical impossibility of maintaining so high a standard of piety, and will almost infallibly drop a large portion of his devout practices. This descent from better to less good produces a demoralizing effect upon the soul, and leads to the opposite extreme of too little piety. Perhaps, too, in order to try the constancy and motives of His new disciple, Our Lord permits the radiance of Thabor to be succeeded by the darkness of Gethsemane. The sense of falling off at the outset, followed by a sense of abandonment, combine to break down the perseverance of the soul in the path upon which it had so happily entered.

The safeguard: seeking advice.

How, then, is our convert to regulate his religious speed? He needs someone to give him the pace, and that person will ordinarily be the

confessor or spiritual guide. Hence, one would impress upon the newly received Catholic the great importance of securing *a fixed confessor*, and of asking advice very freely as to self-management. Holy Writ gives a twofold counsel: "Have confidence in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not upon thy own prudence." One may rightly trust greatly in God for light and guidance, but this does not dispense us from the use of those obvious means of enlightenment with which Christ has supplied the members of His Church. He has given us trained spiritual guides to supplement the uncertainty of our own prudence, and if we are too independent to ask for advice, we have no reason to expect that God will intervene with exceptionally vivid inspirations to save us from taking a false step.

The tyro in any trade or profession who wishes to succeed will often seek for hints from the more experienced. "How would you act in a case like this?" is a question he will often put to his seniors. The need of counsel is yet more urgent in the Catholic profession. As St. Ignatius observes, if prudent people think it necessary to take counsel of others regarding the conduct of worldly affairs, consultation is all the more needed in spiritual ones, on account of the greater difficulty and danger of the spiritual course when not checked by discreet control.

"He will think me silly."

"The confessor will think my question such a silly one," is a thought which may deter a person from speaking out. It is not your question that will be considered foolish, but yourself—that is, if you never have anything to ask. For, being a beginner, no confessor will easily persuade himself that you know everything. Hence, if you *never* put a question, he is more likely to put you down as one of those really foolish folk who have not even the wisdom to know how little they do know.

No question about the concerns of one's soul is silly, though it may be elementary. Any doubt, any difficulty, any perplexity, is a perfectly sensible subject for consultation, and should be promptly disposed of, since, as long as it remains unsettled, it cannot but act as a drag upon one's religious progress.

And if the extreme simplicity of your inquiry should chance to catch the priest off his guard and discover that he, like any other man, answers to the definition, " an animal capable of laughter," what harm ? It is not at all probable, however, that much pain will be caused to your self-love in this way. At all events, it is not your *asking* what you don't know that will cause a smile. That is eminently worthy of a rational being, and in every way to be commended.

Steady, boys, steady !

To sum up : " Festina lente " (Hasten slowly). And that you may overdo neither the haste nor the slowness, obtain precise guidance as to the amount of spirituals suitable for you.

There is one cause which may produce spiritual " cramming," for which the convert is in no way responsible. This leads us to another class of stumbling-blocks—difficulties coming to the convert *from without*—that is to say, either from Catholics or non-Catholics—to which we will afterwards add some remarks upon difficulties proceeding *from within*—that is, from the convert's character or religious or moral antecedents.

Waylaying converts.

From Without.—The writer recalls the case of a Catholic whose one infallible recipe for the conversion of all and sundry heretics was, " Give them Holy Water !" Closely allied to this type of zealous indiscreet is the Catholic whose prudence is unequal to his (or her) piety and good intentions, and who lies in wait for new converts with half a dozen pieties to press upon them. The spiritual advantages (which, needless to say,

it is not our purpose to question) of the various rosaries, scapulars, confraternities, pious associations, novenas, the "heroic act," etc., are all in turn set forth, and the helpless victim gathers the impression that no true Catholic can be without the lot.

The poor, bewildered neophyte feels caught between two fires. Hardly recovered from the novelty of the bare fact of being a Catholic, and yet not feeling equal as yet to undertaking fresh burdens, acceptance of the proffered gifts appears out of the question. On the other hand, refusal may be misunderstood, and deemed suspiciously like a remnant of the old leaven of Protestantism. What is to be done ?

Methods of self-defence.

The best advice would seem to be this :

1. Do not allow yourself to be persuaded. That stops the firing on one side.

2. You can tell that zealous person (sweetly) that, being only quite recently received, you need time to look about you, and that, supposing *your confessor thinks well of it*, you will be pleased to consider those pious practices later on. That is a sound and eminently *Catholic* position to take, and so the bullets from the other side are avoided.

The first need is to get accustomed to the essentials of the Faith. The voluntary pieties can come later, and even then multiplicity is to be avoided. If we regulate the amount according to what it is just possible to get through becomingly in the day under most favourable circumstances, instead of calculating according to our powers on an averagely busy day, the result is that the devotions will be scampered through as things to be got rid of—as an oppressive burden to be discharged, or else they are performed inconstantly or wholly dropped, either of which is demoralizing.

The cold shoulder.

Converts sometimes complain that *Catholics are less sociable* than other people, and that they find themselves left out in the cold—at all events in the earlier days of their conversion. The first part of the indictment appears to the writer unfounded. In days preceding the passing of the Catholic Emancipation—a measure which broke through the social barrier set up between Catholics and non-Catholics by persecuting laws—no doubt Catholics mixed little with those of their own faith, and this will have tended to increase sociability among themselves. The removal of the social barrier—not an unmixed benefit, some think, to purity of faith—facilitated social intercourse with non-Catholics, and Catholic exclusiveness thenceforth continued to diminish. And as things now stand, it is difficult to see what evidence there is for the alleged unsociableness of Catholics as compared with non-Catholics.

Possible explanations.

How, then, are we to account for an impression which is certainly produced upon certain converts? For, though the actual want of sociability may be imaginary, the *feeling* of being left out in the cold is not. Over-sensitiveness apart, a convert perhaps notices a certain slowness on the part of Catholics in holding out the hand of fellowship. Is there any creditable explanation of this phenomenon? One way of accounting for it might be that the knowledge of a given convert's reception does not always spread as rapidly as the person mainly concerned in that event might fancy. The hen cackles over each of its ovigerous feats. But the Catholic Church is not wont to beat the big drum on gaining a new proselyte. Apart from this, the candidate, for good reasons, may have wished to keep the reception as far as possible from public notice. The nervous and sensitive, too, may shrink from breaking the ice and making themselves known

as Catholics, not from any unworthy motive, but out of pure shyness. Hence, a Catholic can hardly do a greater charity in such cases than by coming to their rescue, and introducing them to some good Catholics. "I was a stranger, and you visited me."

A point for reflection.

Such seeming exclusiveness does not necessarily imply a moral fault in the Catholic body. But neither need it involve any on the part of the new member. And yet it would, nevertheless, be well for those suffering under a sense of exclusion to consider whether they are themselves to blame. This is at least possible. If so, it will probably be on account of certain "corners" in their characters which would equally prevent—perhaps has, in the past, prevented—the making of friendships in non-Catholic circles also.

This is not meant as a reproach, even though these defects may be culpable. The rich graces, Sacramental and others, accumulated in the course of reconciliation to the Church, do not instantly change the leopard's spots, though they do impart the power for gradually accomplishing that otherwise impossible feat.

Catholics sometimes in fault.

But is it impossible to suppose a want of charity towards converts on the part of their new-found brethren? It is to be feared not altogether. We know how pronounced was the exclusiveness with which Cardinal Wiseman had to contend during his archiepiscopate. But the type of Catholic who looks down upon a convert, as if a "lower-grade" Catholic, is, fortunately, wellnigh extinct. Conversions to the Faith have become such everyday events as to pass almost unnoticed, while at the same time their number has brought about a saner state of mind among so-called "born Catholics." The over-boastful "children of Abraham" can no longer have it all their own way.

Advertising one's conversion.

But it will not help towards the final extinction of that overweening race if the convert volunteer to all comers the information, "Oh, you know, I'm not a proper Catholic—I'm *only* a convert." That hardly seems the way to speak of one of the most marvellous works of God. As a useful hint to a confessor, in order to enlist his help in earlier confessions, the *second* half of the above avowal may pass.

Should such narrow-minded prejudice ever bring sorrow to the convert, let him remember that it is no genuine product of Catholicism, and let him deal with the mortification as he would with any other—namely, with as much meekness and patience as, with God's grace, he can command. This is in a true sense suffering for justice' sake, and therefore shares in the blessing pronounced by Our Divine Lord.

Trials from Non-Catholics.

The unpardonable sin.

Had you left some "Free Church" for the Church of England, you would have been considered by many to have become more "respectable." The reverse process would have been regarded with somewhat less favour, but still many of your former co-religionists would have found some excuse in the "lack of discipline" and "lamentable divisions" in the State Church. If you had become a Buddhist, a Christian Scientist, or a Mormon, you would probably have been thought a trifle strange. Yet, upon the whole, you would have attracted to yourself no little sympathetic curiosity, and your friends would have been dying to hear all about your newly adopted persuasion. All such delinquencies, if, indeed, regarded as such, would have found excuse, if not pardon. There is only one religious change—the one by which a person stands to lose

most in the worldly sense—that cannot hope for the world's forgiveness, and that is submission to Rome! That is, in the eyes of many, the "unforgiven sin" which shall not be pardoned in this world, whatever it may be in the world to come!

"charitable" interpretation.

Some, it may be, wishing to push charity to its utmost limits, will speak of you in terms of pitying patronage, and intimate in mysterious undertones, and with a knowing shake of the head, that—as everyone must have noticed—you were always "a little odd." That *must* be the true explanation of your change! For is it not an admitted axiom (in certain circles) that no one endowed with a well-compacted set of brains could possibly "go over to Rome" from rational conviction?

"The Church of your Baptism."

Others will accuse you of "forsaking the Church of your Baptism." It matters not to them that this is a charge which—in the face of St. Paul's "*one* baptism"—breaks a primary rule of logic by "begging the question." Others, again, will inform you of quite a number of absurd beliefs and wicked practices to which you commit yourself by becoming a "Romanist." It is useless for you either to deny the existence of some or the depravity of others, because your informants always know better. The information is commonly prefaced with "everybody knows," and that, of course, is conclusive!

"Romish abominations."

"The incomparable Liturgy."

You are reproached for turning your back upon "the incomparable simplicity of our English Liturgy," and of yielding to the tawdry seduction of the "sensuous worship of Rome." In vain you plead, perhaps, that the said "simplicity" is comparable to that dubious sample of the same which is obtained by mutilation—even as a human body is "simplified" when a shell has eliminated head, legs, and arms. You will further urge in vain that "sensuousness" of ritual—whatever

the fitness of the term as applied to the beauty and variety of Catholic ceremonial—is not unknown in sections of Anglicanism, where, however, it has the drawback of defying the letter and spirit of the Thirty-Nine Articles, and of lacking the inner reality of a well-defined and united faith.

Various false charges.

You will be told that, as a Catholic, you pay Divine honour to the Virgin Mary, and are not allowed to pray direct to Christ. A shower of Bible texts will follow about the One Mediator, all infallibly true, but entirely beside the point as used. The Bible, you are assured, to your considerable astonishment, has become to you a forbidden book. Your new faith binds you to consign — however reluctantly — all your non-Catholic kith and kin to eternal flames! But what need to rehearse the entire stale and ignorant catalogue of what Catholics *don't* believe or practise? It was to be expected that you would be the object of much "false witness," for the Protestant is prone to forgetting his Ninth Commandment where Catholics are concerned.

The eighth Beatitude.

Did not Our Saviour foretell that men would "speak all that is evil against you untruly," and did He not bless in advance those who were to suffer this cruel cross "for My sake," and pledge His word that their reward would be "exceeding great in Heaven"?

Or it may be that you will not need to draw upon highly spiritual motives for comfort, but will be carried through by your own happy sense of humour—a quality in which so many good non-Catholic opponents are sadly lacking.

CHAPTER V

TRIALS FROM WITHIN

MANY of the external difficulties already dealt with involve, of course, trials of the heart. But here we will review one or two others which are mostly confined within its limits.

> "For gold must be tried by fire
> As the heart must be tried by pain."

Revival of the old Adam.

Return or Increase of Temptations.—Those who previous to their conversion have had to contend against grave temptations need to be warned against a danger of a peculiarly treacherous character.

It is probable that in the first days of their Catholic life they may find themselves astonishingly free from the old assaults of passion. We have alluded before to the possibility of their experiencing a Thabor of interior comfort and consciousness of spiritual strength upon reception. While gratefully accepting this grace as a pledge of Divine goodness, the beginner should beware of adding on to it of his own, and imagining that all difficulties with self have vanished for ever. This would be a delusion, and a most perilous one to boot. For the storm may return suddenly, and if the barque have not its sails ready for reefing, it may be thrown upon its beam ends, and run the risk of shipwreck.

Vigilance not to be relaxed.

This caution applies with special force to the *avoiding of former occasions of sin.* The exhortation of St. Paul to "walk circumspectly" should never be lost sight of, however smooth and pleasant the path of self-control may appear for the time being.

Spiritual "ups" and "downs."

Similar is the warning given by St. Ignatius de Loyola, where he bids the soul enjoying spiritual consolation not to be elated, but to keep in view the change to desolation and darkness which may ensue. On the same principle he bids the desolate and tempted look forward in hope to the comfort and peace which God is likely to restore to him, if he prove faithful.

So, too, the *Imitation of Christ:* "Think not thyself wholly forsaken though for a time I have sent thee some tribulation, or withdrawn from thee the consolation which thou desirest, for this is the way to the kingdom of Heaven. And without doubt it is more expedient for thee and all My servants that ye be tried by adversity, than ye should have all things according to your inclination. . . . I know thy hidden thoughts; I know that it is expedient for thy salvation that thou shouldst sometimes be left without savour, lest thou shouldst be puffed up with good success, and take pleasure in thyself in that which thou art not."[1]

The convert, therefore, can hardly expect that admission into the Fold will bring him complete freedom from old temptations. He may, however, rightly expect to find that the aids which the Faith supplies add indefinitely to his powers of resistance. But the thing that does, perhaps, surprise him is that temptation should make itself more strongly or more often felt than in non-Catholic days. "How is it," comes the question, "that I have experienced far more provocation to sin since I became a Catholic than

[1] Book iii., chap. xxx., n. 4.

I did previous to my conversion? Not merely have my old weaknesses been more importunate, but new temptations have appeared in my life to which formerly I was a stranger."

Here a few principles must be kept in view. Temptation is not in itself an evil, though consent to it—that is to say, sin—undoubtedly is. "*Blessed* is the man that suffereth temptation, for when he shall have been tried, he shall receive the crown of glory."[1] St. Paul, as we know, "thrice besought the Lord" to be delivered from the "sting of the flesh." But God's answer was that His grace was sufficient, and that temptation had its advantage: "For power is made perfect in infirmity." Upon which the Apostle adds: "Gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."[2] Principles.

The fact, however, of temptations having *increased* still remains to be explained. But, first, is it really a fact? or, at all events, may not the *new* temptations be simply due to a change of circumstances and surroundings such as might have occurred equally had you remained a non-Catholic? No; you are sure that is not it. Well, the increase is not impossible. Yet, apart from altered conditions of life, it may rather be that, owing to the more delicate perception of right and wrong, that more definite understanding of God's law and realization of the need to control thought and feeling, as well as words and acts, which the teaching of the Church has developed in you, you now *notice* temptations at once that indeed swept over your soul before and ravaged it, but almost unperceived? You are beginning to acquire the habit of keeping stricter watch over those avenues of your heart—the senses—and this produces the impression that the number of trespassers has multiplied. Increase—real, or seeming.

[1] Jas. i. 12. [2] 2 Cor. xii. 7.

Granting increase, an explanation.

But, if you still insist on the reality of the increase, another explanation may be offered. Let me repeat an old anecdote by way of prelude. A Protestant "fare" was once being conveyed through Dublin by an Irish "jarvey," and, taking it for granted that his driver was a "Papist," put him the following question: "If the Devil came upon us, Pat, this evening, which of us two do you think he would carry off first?" "Why, myself, for sure, your honour," came the prompt reply. "But how's that, Pat?" exclaimed the Protestant. "I thought you Papists considered that Heaven was your exclusive property." "Well, you see, your honour," answered the "jarvey," as if reasoning the matter out, "it's this way: The old gentleman would say to himself, 'I can have the *other* man at *any* time.'"

Satan's predicament.

Without vouching for the story, it will serve as a somewhat overdrawn illustration of the answer to the problem of increased temptation after conversion. One need not claim virtue as a Catholic monopoly in order to establish the fact that a Catholic is furnished with far more efficient means for warding off temptation. In this way he has a decided advantage over others. The incalculable power of the Sacraments is always at his disposal—above all, Confession and the Strong Bread of the Eucharist. Now, no one is more fully aware of this advantage than that—to the Catholic—very real person, the Enemy of Souls. By joining the Church, therefore, the convert has, as it were, built up additional defences against the assaults of Satan, whether the latter attack directly or through his allies, the world and the flesh. This is a lowering of the Devil's chances of success little calculated to soothe the Satanic temper, or to make Satan less keen to conquer the converted soul *from the first*, lest it get still more hopelessly beyond his reach. He is not at

all pleased with you, my dear convert—be sure of that. The disapproval of "the step" manifested by your friends is praise itself compared to the Devil's view of it. Hence, if he cannot actually tear you from Our Lord's arms by robbing you of sanctifying grace, he will, at all events, strive to make your faithful service of Him as uncomfortable as possible by means of continual molestations. He hopes that you may be foolish enough to fall into the snare, and abandon that service as too irksome for human endurance. Do not be deceived, but look up into the Heavens laid open by the Church to the sight of faith on that soul-cheering feast of All Saints. See among that crowd innumerable, gathered from every tribe, and tongue, and nation—no, not so much those giants of holiness whom we honour upon our altars, but many another whom we have known and loved (and quarrelled with, perhaps) in life. They are men and women of the same frail stuff as ourselves. Their temptations were not essentially different from our own, for the three concupiscences do not vary. Yet behold them bathed in that fathomless ocean of bliss—the all-beatifying, Infinite God! As the wounded knight Ignatius de Loyola pondered, while perusing, *faute de mieux*, the Lives of the Saints, "What they have done cannot I, with the help of God, do also?"

Ignatian rules.

Stand firm, then, sorely tried convert, and notice two teachings of Ignatius, the Saint and author of the *Spiritual Exercises*, which may be popularized thus:

1. The Devil resembles some infuriated fish-wife flying at a man. If the latter stand up to her and show a bold front, she will fly. But let him show but the tip of the white feather and she will tear his eyes out. There is no wild beast so pitiless as Satan, if once you yield to him.

2. The Enemy of Souls conducts himself like some unprincipled lover, who persuades his sweetheart to say nothing to her parents of his undesirable attentions, in order that he may the more surely compass her ruin.

The lessons to be drawn from these two comparisons are fairly obvious : (1) Resist temptation *firmly*, and at its *very beginning*. (2) Do not conceal the fact that you are going through severe temptation from your spiritual Father. Let him know from the first.

Resistance means merit, not guilt.

However fierce the assault is, however long it last, however atrocious its nature, and however often it may return, persuade yourself that nothing can harm you nor diminish God's love for you except *consent of your will*. On the contrary, each tiniest act of resistance increases your merit, intensifies the love borne you by the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and entitles you to a richer measure of Heavenly joy for all eternity.

"Feelings" to be distrusted.

An Important Caution.—This point needs to be insisted on. It is important for everyone to realize the distinction between "feeling" and the free action of the "will" with full *advertence* of the mind. But for those who have come out of Protestantism the distinction is peculiarly vital. For Protestantism, whether in its lower or higher forms, rests largely upon emotionalism. It is too inconsistent to appeal strongly to the intellect and reasoning faculty, and hence, to gain a hold upon the soul, it must needs appeal to sentiment and emotion. Religion, if it be true and fit for human beings, should satisfy both these elements in our nature—viz., reason and emotion. Thus, the Catholic Church satisfies both by the perfect consistency and logical interconnection of her dogmatic system, and by the beauty of her teaching viewed in itself, and manifested externally in her attractive ritual. Thus both reason and feel-

ing are blended together in the Catholic Faith. In the non-Catholic, feeling is unduly in the ascendant. This emotionalism, developed to excess under the influence of the religion formerly professed by the convert, requires him to be particularly careful to discount "feelings" in times of temptation. He, and especially she, needs to bear clearly in mind that merit or demerit before God in that hour of trial depends not upon what we "feel," but upon what we "mean and will."[1] And as, to please God, we must have His grace, and to displease Him we must lose it, it is essential to remember that grace is not an emotion, nor a necessarily *perceptible* inward movement, but a supernatural and physical quality bestowed upon us, which, however little it be felt, remains absolutely unaltered, except in as far as *our deliberate will* steps in to modify its action or to destroy it.

Examples of deceptive feeling.

Thus, the person who is charitable and obliging by natural temperament "feels" amiably disposed. On the contrary, the soul that is prone to anger and resentment by nature, but resists the temptation on supernatural motives, "feels" stormy within, and the reverse of amiable. Yet the mere natural kindliness of feeling possessed by the former avails him nought for increasing in grace before God, while the latter, despite the tempest he is quelling within, becomes dearer to God, and is adding to his eternal rewards. Or, again, the Anglican who revels in the æsthetic charms of a grand English minster, with its pealing organ, the mysterious wafting of cherub voices through the Gothic edifice, the perfect reading of the lessons, etc., "feels" as if in the third Heaven. The convert whose place of worship is now some temporary iron structure or loft,

[1] Notice this when greater frequency of communions seems to cool devotion.

located on the opposite side of the road, with its shabby vestments, unadorned services, and its crude singing to a rasping, gusty harmonium, "feels" the contrast as a painful shock. Yet reason, enlightened by faith, declares this to be "no other than the house of God and gate of Heaven"—the lowly manger of the King of Heaven. It tells us that not all the outward charms of the once Catholic minster can compensate for the Real *Absence* of our sacramental Lord, nor for the capital loss of the "clean oblation" of Holy Mass—the supreme glory of the most wretched Catholic mission chapel! The distressed convert's reason is right; his "feeling" is entirely wrong and misleading. I do not mean that it is *sinful*, provided his *will* and *intention* be in the right place.

In no class of human miseries must the convert mark more carefully the wide difference between "feeling" and "will" than in those baser temptations which appeal at times to the animal nature of the best. As their biographies tell us for our comfort, the very Saints of God have experienced such. Unlike evil suggestions of a more intellectual kind, which treacherously ally themselves with man's nobler instincts, sensual temptation may seem to soil the innocence of the soul by the very fact of its occurrence. This, however, is mere *feeling*. Reason, aided by faith, tells us, on the contrary, that God will judge us by the deliberate purpose of our spiritual *wills*, and not by involuntary, and may be detested, experiences of our lower nature, albeit humbling to our pride. In that humiliation, which must not be mistaken for guilt, there lurks a grace. It is, then, only *consent of the will* that can injure our position before God, and only *full* consent that can deprive us of His love. The more importunate the temptation, the higher does resistance

raise us in the Divine acceptance, and the brighter the glory of our Heavenly crown. The above holds equally in temptations to grave intemperance, in the popular sense. For, theologically speaking, chastity also falls under *temperance*—the fourth "cardinal" virtue of the Catholic Catechism.

Sinful habits.

Besetting Sins.—Habits of grave sin may have been developed in the past, perhaps in ignorance or imperfect knowledge of their gravity in God's sight. In any case, they are likely still to cause trouble. What is the best remedy? Prayer will do much, and avoidance of all *proximate occasions of sin* is, of course, essential. But prayer will droop, and perseverance in shunning what we know leads *us* to sin will fail without the use of a further means. St. Alphonsus Liguori will tell us what it is: "There is no evil habit, however inveterate, that can hold out against Daily Communion."

Daily Communion "Divine Remedy."

We cannot pause here to show how the Eucharistic Decrees of Pius X. bear out and set the seal of authority upon this teaching of the Holy Doctor. Daily Communion may be honestly beyond your reach. If so, then be confident that you will gain the victory so long as you continue perseveringly to use, in the state of grace, the "Divine Remedy" of the Bread of Life for the quelling of human passions as frequently as you can.[1]

Venial sin.

Minor Faults.—In some ways, perhaps, the task of mending our smaller failings is more arduous than that of suppressing graver ones. First, because, as we know from the Council of Trent, it is *practically* impossible, without some special privilege such as the Immaculate Mother received, to lead a life entirely free from all venial sin. Not that our will is not free, or that grace is denied us, but that the continual struggle against venial sin is so harassing, and occasions pro-

[1] See list of works on Frequent and Daily Communion at the end of this volume.

voking us to it so numerous, that, as a matter of fact, we shall not so correspond with grace as to escape it altogether. Secondly, in the case of temptation to *mortal* sin, we feel that our very salvation hangs in the balance, and this rouses us to more determined effort. The magnitude of the contest, also, appeals more powerfully to our sense of heroism, and the victory seems indefinitely more worth obtaining, whereas less credit appears to be attached to those smaller conquests of self.

Right estimate of "venials."

Treatment of Venial Sin.—The first thing is to form a correct estimate as to the importance of these minor transgressions, so as neither to *despise* them as mere nothings, nor yet to *exaggerate* them. Viewed in the light of God's dread Holiness and His unlimited claim to the service of His creatures, no sin, whether mortal or venial, can be regarded as a negligible trifle. Moreover, venial sin tends to check the flow of God's graces and favours, while correspondence with His inspirations in small things causes them to flow more abundantly. Then, if not expiated on earth—and every sin must be expiated ere Heaven can be gained—the pains of Purgatory await it after death. Moreover, unrestrained indulgence *with full and calm deliberation* in venial sin—especially in certain more seductive kinds of it—are apt to hurry the soul into a grievous offence upon the occurrence of a more than usually violent temptation.

"Venials" not to be exaggerated.

This is one side of the picture. But there is another side as well. God is Good, as well as Holy and Just. He does not withdraw from us, on account of venial offences, that measure of love which we enjoyed up to the time of committing them. It is we who have grown colder in *our* love, not He in His. Were it otherwise, one could easily show that some (unknown) number of venial sins must end by exhausting

the grace within us—thus producing in our soul the deadly effects of *mortal* sin—that is, the *entire loss* of God's friendship and love. But this is false, for, as we know, no number of venial sins can *accumulate* so as to equal a *mortal* sin in its spiritual effects of soul-murder, any more than any number of kittens will make a dog.

Easily effaced.

Then there are innumerable ways of wiping out these minor stains, quite apart from Confession, as the Council of Trent tells us—*e.g.*, acts of sorrow for them, *devout* use of Holy Water or of other "Sacramentals," hearing Holy Mass, going to Communion, etc. . . . This cleansing, however, presupposes that we *wish* to be rid of these lighter faults, and do not cling to them with affection.

"Venials" classified.

It is useful, also, to notice the difference between venial sin and venial sin. Such faults may be either *fully* deliberate or *partly* deliberate. There is a great difference, for instance, between a systematic, calculated practice of speaking cuttingly to a person whom I dislike and a passing intemperate word blurted out under sudden provocation (but still with an underlying advertence to the wrongness of it), or between a lying excuse made under a sudden sense of shame and a premeditated lying explanation. The more cool and deliberate class of fault can and should be corrected, and the difficulty of doing so is less great. This should be the earnest aim of anyone who aspires to a truly Christian life. Fully deliberate "venials" form very fitting (though not *obligatory*) matter for Confession. As for the semi-wilful faults, a soul will need to have reached no mean a degree of holiness in order to have so far corrected them that they seldom occur even in secret thoughts and feelings. In the meantime, such faults of mere human weakness rather than of malice, though calling for

correction as being evil in themselves, and productive of evil if a soul allow itself to be *dejected* by them, have at least this indirect benefit, that they form wholesome matter for constant self-humiliation before God, and diminish the danger of spiritual self-complacency.

A source of worry.

Neglected Opportunities.—These are at times a cause of considerable perplexity and worry. By a neglected opportunity is here meant, not a spiritual good that has been missed by positive sin, but rather an occasion for performing some optional virtuous act, the omission of which leaves the convert disturbed by a vague sense of guilt. To give an illustration. I am out for a walk, or I am going to, or returning from, my daily occupation or work. Passing by a church, the idea crosses my mind that I can well spend a few minutes in paying a visit to Our Blessed Lord in the Sacrament of His Love and Condescension. Instead of doing so, I pass on. It is not that there was any reason preventing the act of piety. I could have performed it, but I did not. Or, again, on Sunday it is my custom, besides fulfilling the duty of hearing Mass, to go to Benediction. But it happens to-day that I am in the thick of a very interesting novel, and I continue reading it in place of going to church. These are certainly missed opportunities. But am I to consider myself guilty of *sin?*

Duty or generosity?

Whenever the question, "Is this a sin?" arises, it can be answered by solving another question, "Is there any law, of God or of the Church, *commanding* me to perform what I have omitted?" If, to the best of my knowledge, the answer to this second question is "No," then the answer to the first one is the same. In the service of God there are two distinct fields: the field of *obligation under sin* and the field of *generosity*. In other words, amongst those things

which please God there are things which He commands and things which He only advises.[1] As God, He might always command; but in His Divine moderation, in His tender pity for our human frailty, He refrains. I may act contrary to His *good pleasure*—made known to me by clear inspirations or by spiritual authority—without necessarily rebelling against his positive will, and so *sinning* (either mortally or venially). I may be niggardly towards Infinite Generosity, I may act foolishly for the interests of my soul, by omissions similar to those above instanced; but as there is no command to pay private visits to the Blessed Sacrament, nor to attend Benediction, the mere fact of my using the liberty which God has left me in these respects does not constitute a sin against Him. There may be imperfection, but not sin. It is, indeed, possible that a person may not only let go opportunities, but miss them out of some sinful motive or disposition, such as vanity, human respect, petty spite, etc. But, then, the fault does not lie in the omission, but in the *motive* which prompted it, and to which I consented. Thus, a person stays away from an optional church service, perhaps, out of revenge for some offence which he considers to have been given him by the priest, which would be like a schoolboy refusing his pudding to spite the prefect.

Doubts about Vocation to Religious Life.

Ought I to be a religious?

Nothing is more common than for recent converts to conceive a desire to devote themselves particularly to the service of Our Blessed Lord in the cloister. This, it is true, is more often the case with younger women than with those of riper years, or with men.

[1] The adoption of religious life is one of these.

I am speaking here of a desire that *follows* upon conversion to the Faith rather than one that *precedes* it. Yet cases may certainly occur in which a person is *led on towards the Church* by a preconceived wish to become a religious. Let us now consider both contingencies.

1. Desire following conversion.

1. Where the seeming vocation to a cloistered life makes itself felt *after reception* into the Church, it is, above all, necessary to notice the difference between a *mere appreciation* of the religious state and a *real call* to it. Younger women specially need to notice this difference.

It is natural that a mind upon which the glorious vision of the Catholic Faith bursts for the first time in all its attractive beauty should look upon the religious state, as exhibited by the Church, and, in its full reality, by her alone, as one of the most wonderful features of Catholicism. Moreover, the true woman is specially drawn towards manifestations of devotedness and self-sacrifice. Add to this that perhaps she has been taught in the past to believe every evil thing concerning monks and nuns, and hence the full discovery of the falsehoods by which she has been deceived, causes in her a powerful reaction in their favour. In short, she conceives a high idea bordering upon enthusiasm for what she was formerly accustomed to abhor. "Action and reaction are equal and opposite," science tells us. The convert sees how good a thing it is to live for God alone, whether in utter separation from the world or devoted to educational or charitable works for the service of one's neighbour, with a main view to his eternal interests and the honour of God. And an intimate conviction of this truth excites an ardent wish to live according to it. Nevertheless, there may be all the while no *vocation*, or call from God, at all.

Due care in so grave a matter as the choice of

a final state of life demands that nothing be done in haste. A few months after reception is rather too soon to set about so momentous a change. *Usually*, one would strongly urge the recent convert to wait two or three years before taking any steps in the matter. The first thing is to get thoroughly at home with the essentials of Catholic life before passing to its higher manifestations.

2. Before conversion.

2. *When the Desire* precedes *Conversion.*—The situation here is different. In order of time, the convert has first of all felt drawn to a complete oblation of self to God's service, and this attraction has in turn led on to inquiry into that Church where the true spirit of the cloister alone appeared to obtain its fulfilment. In this case, therefore, the wish for religious life is not born of any sudden impulse or access of enthusiasm due to a new and soul-stirring revelation. It is a gradual and steady growth, apparently fostered and closely interwoven by Divine grace with the very gift of the True Faith itself.

Still, even here some caution and examination is needed, for—

1. It may happen that the conception of Catholic conventual life built up outside the Fold is an unreal and poetic dream, and further familiarity with the religion of which that life is so signal an exponent may dispel the æsthetic illusion.

Æsthetic attraction.

Long years ago, as the writer can testify, a young lady of High-Church—or, as they were then called, Puseyite—leanings chanced to turn out of a noisy London thoroughfare into a retired Convent Chapel during time of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The altar was ablaze with lights, the air sweetly laden with incense perfume, the swelling strains of the chant crept mysteriously through the building, the habit of the adoring Sisters, with its cream-white and

light blue serges—including a sweeping train for solemn occasions—was pleasant to see, and a silver heart gleamed upon the breast of each religious. On returning home, this young lady described in glowing terms what she had witnessed, and—somewhat to the alarm of her less advanced relatives—declared with fervour how much she would like to be one of that community. She knew nothing, of course, of the hidden asperities of the life, the meagre fare, the silence and recollection, the self-sacrifice and voluntary penance. The moral is that a vocation drawing its inspiration chiefly from millinery and other sensible attractions would be unlikely to stand the wear and tear of the true nun's inner self-crucifixion.

Catholic lay-life under-valued.

2. The ideal of religious life conceived by the non-Catholic previous to becoming fully acquainted with the Faith may quite easily have fallen far below the reality, so as not to have exceeded the standard of Christian holiness which can be, and often is, reached in the purely lay life of exemplary Catholics. Any more exalted standard than this might prove to be beyond the spiritual strength of the convert aspirant.

So, even under our second supposition, inconsiderate haste in deciding upon the religious life is to be avoided. Still, undoubtedly exceptional instances do occur in which a recent convert may without any rashness pass through the portals of the Catholic Church straight into the inner sanctum of the cloister.[1]

[1] Due reflection, too, in the choice of a *particular* religious Order or congregation is all the more necessary now that fresh legislation has issued from the Holy See restricting the admission into religious bodies of those who have once commenced their noviciate proper—*i.e.*, who have been "clothed"—in some other Order or congregation. A special permission from the Holy See will in future be needed for such a change, both in the case of males (Decree, Sept. 7, 1909) and of females (Decree, Jan. 4, 1910).

CHAPTER VI

THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE

"*The way of the fool is right in his own eyes, but he that is wise hearkeneth to counsel*" (Prov. xii. 15). A Church to be trusted.

ONE of the great benefits of being a Catholic is that guidance upon which one can conscientiously act is to be had for the asking. People of other creeds may be free to submit moral problems to their ministers in cases of difficulty, and the advice received may be wise and prudent. But the Catholic, from the very nature of his Faith, has a right to *trust* to the priest's decisions in a way that is not *consistently* lawful for non-Catholics. The reason is evident. The fundamental principle of non-Catholic forms of Christianity is that in religious matters a man must exercise his private judgment. Private judgment is thus made the final court of appeal. As a result, counsel as to how it is lawful to act in circumstances of doubt and difficulty will only relieve the non-Catholic applicant for spiritual direction of personal responsibility if, upon examination, he judge that counsel to be correct. He cannot logically say to himself: "Well, my clergyman says I may do this or that, and therefore I can do it with a safe conscience." He remains with

the full weight of responsibility upon his shoulders. The position of the Catholic client toward his priest is entirely different, for the confessor receives from the Church a share in her Divinely given authority to guide souls to Heaven. He therefore becomes, in his own sphere, an *authority* for his penitent, who has a conscientious right to throw the responsibility upon the confessor's shoulders in a case of perplexity, and be at peace in carrying out his directions.

Confessors not infallible.

Are these directions *infallibly* sound in themselves? Not at all. But they are *practically* unerring as regards the penitent—that is to say, though the priest may make a mistake, in spite of the special help given him by God to guide the souls lawfully committed to his pastoral care, yet if I act upon what he tells me, no blame will attach to *me* at the Judgment-Seat for doing as I was advised. I can successfully plead with my Judge that I did as *He* told me, for I followed the instructions of those whom He gave me for my guides, through His general commission to the Church for leading souls in the way of justice. In other words, the basis of my confidence in the direction of confessors is the *authority* given to His Church by Jesus Christ, and not the individual learning, prudence, experience, or degree of holiness of my director.

Qualifications in confessor.

Then, is there no extra benefit to be gained by consulting a specially learned, prudent, experienced, or holy priest?

As regards the shifting of all responsibility from myself to him, there is no extra gain whatever. But, of course, advice which is mistaken—as we have implied a priest's may sometimes be—will often lead to undesirable consequences, although

I, at least, shall have no account to give for their occurrence. Hence, in matters of exceptional difficulty I act quite rightly and wisely in choosing a director whom I have reason to think exceptionally qualified to deal with the matter in question.

Four qualities have just been mentioned as desirable in a spiritual guide: learning, prudence, experience, and holiness. Of these four, so enlightened a soul as St. Teresa placed learning first, and holiness (with small learning) in a secondary place. This was the conclusion at which she arrived after much perplexity and anxiety during the earlier period in her interior life.

Opposite opinions.

A difficulty dealt with elsewhere[1] may usefully be touched upon here. In a case of doubt I consult two different confessors, X and Y. Each gives a different decision as to the lawfulness of some course of conduct which I am contemplating. How can this be in a Church which is ever one in its teaching in respect to faith and moral conduct? You will find that such divergences of opinion generally arise not from any difference of *principle*, but from difference of individual judgment in *applying* a principle to particular circumstances. It is just in a case of this sort that varying degrees of prudence and wisdom may reveal themselves. But as for the penitent, either priest being an authority for him, he may lawfully adopt whichever of the two opinions he pleases. Just as the State makes laws, and, in difficult cases, competent lawyers interpret a law differently, so the Church legislates, and her doctors may disagree in applying the laws to a particular case. No laws, whether secular or ecclesiastical, can possibly consider

[1] *Letters on Christian Doctrine*, vol. ii., p. 349.

every possible set of circumstances that may occur.

Need of direction.

In temporal affairs we hold it to the part of a wise man to seek advice from experts in matters of greater difficulty. Yet the things of earth are, after all, within the natural human ken. But the things of God are not natural to us, nor is the spiritual path to be explored by mere human wisdom.

It is nevertheless true that some persons are less able to guide their own souls than others. Nor is this difference confined to spiritual affairs. The question before us is how to strike a proper mean between excessive dependence and a rash self-sufficiency.

At the beginning, the new member will stand in peculiar need of advice. We have already seen the folly of being too proud or too timid to ask questions. As time goes on, the general lines on which the ordinary spiritual life should proceed will become fairly clear, and the call for frequent reference to the spiritual director will diminish, though it will not altogether disappear.

Excessive dependence.

Upon the whole, the tendency of the fresh convert will be to err rather on the side of excess in consulting. In particular, an idea is prone to develop that no priest but the one who gave the instructions and performed the rite of reception is capable of giving proper guidance. Now, it is only natural and right to hold in grateful esteem one who, under God, has been the means of securing that inestimable treasure, the True Faith of Christ, and the supernatural helps which it includes. Moreover—as with infants—the personal care of the parent is specially valuable in the first period of life. But the time comes when weaning is expedient, and even unavoidable.

So, too, in this ever-changing world, circumstances may easily arise in which access to the convert's *Padre* will be very difficult, or perhaps impossible. And then, if the person has fostered the conviction that "I could never go to any other priest," his spiritual progress will be likely to suffer, and—even worse—may be changed to a perilous downward movement.

Spiritual daintiness.

The thing is to school oneself so as at least to be able to confess substantially to any priest whatever, if the need should arise. It would certainly be idle to deny that special experience and discernment are sometimes required for counselling rightly. But these cases are less numerous than people are apt to fancy. To assume that my soul is such a very "extra-special" article that only a Saint and Doctor can properly guide it, is a form of spiritual self-importance needing the restraint of humble common sense.

Limits of advice.

Then, again, with respect to the *kind of subjects* for consultation one may fall into excess. It will be useful to point out some limitations. The spiritual director does not claim to make sumptuary laws : control of the fashions is not included in his commission, beyond maintaining the Catholic standards of modesty and of honesty in dealing with tailors and dressmakers. Nor is he a physician for prescribing medicines or a dietary, beyond upholding the duty of temperance, and advising means for overcoming the vices of gluttony and drunkenness. Indirectly he may have cause to intervene if mortifications of the appetite and sense be carried to lengths which seem injurious to the daily duties or spiritual progress of his client. Perhaps in past days the convert believed that the Catholic was essentially a "priest-ridden" person. Well, it would be a

pity, after discarding so false a notion, to act as though it were true.

Counsels. One would tender the following counsels with respect to seeking spiritual direction :

1. Have *a fixed confessor* and be perfectly open with him about your soul. Do not *by choice* run about from priest to priest. An instance is recorded of an old woman who was attending a public Mission given by a band of priests. Close on midnight, on the last night of the exercises, she was heard issuing from one of the confessionals exclaiming with fervour : " Praise be to God ! Now I've made a ' general ' (confession) to the lot of ye !" You do not constantly change your doctor, I expect. The principle is the same. To prescribe wisely for your bodily health, the physician—unless he be a genius—needs to know your constitution thoroughly. The confessor may be a very capable priest, and yet lack that special gift of intuition which we see to have distinguished certain Saints and very holy persons. Besides, if you go to a confessor only once in a way, he will probably suppose that you receive regular spiritual guidance elsewhere. Accordingly, he will simply receive your confession, give a penance, and after absolving you, send you away with his blessing. He will see no call to turn every chance penitent inside out in order to discover matter for counsel, none having been asked for. Yet, just as we sometimes have to consult specialist doctors, so we may need to go to some special confessor.

2. The spirit of the Catholic Church, revealed in her legislature concerning the Sacrament of Penance, is that each penitent should, as far as his circumstance allow, enjoy the *most perfect freedom* in the choice of confessors. She fully

recognizes the trial to human nature inherent in the Divine precept of Confession, and also the accidental difficulties that may occur. Hence, with a tenderness derived from the spirit of the Sacred Heart, she would render the fulfilment of this duty as palatable to man's weakness as possible. Thus, if need arise, the convert should not be deterred from using this liberty to the full by any consideration of a *personal* nature. The notion that a particular priest may be offended by a temporary or permanent change need not be taken into consideration. For no Catholic priest is entitled to any explanation as to the reasons which lead a penitent to turn elsewhere. Rather the penitent has a right to suppose that a priest who takes so much interest in his soul will be glad that he should act in the manner most conducive to his spiritual comfort.

3. Avoid *over-sensitiveness* if found fault with by your spiritual guide, even if he—being a fallible mortal—seem to treat you rather more harshly than the case requires. Remember that priests share the infirmities to which human nature is heir, and may be unwell, or wearied out by anxieties, or "slum" work of which you know nothing. Or perhaps he may think an occasional snub not unwholesome for your soul! Strive to cultivate the true spirit of faith which entirely *sinks the man* in the "dispenser of the mysteries of God."

4. Studiously shun "confessional talk" with your intimates over five o'clock tea, or at other times. Do not forget that in discoursing—perhaps with artistic touches of your own—upon what the priest said, you have the confessor at an unfair advantage. *You* may talk, but *his* tongue is tied!

5. Much more might be said on the relations between the confessor and penitent. But this chapter is not meant as a complete instruction on the Sacrament of Penance.[1]

[1] For further instruction, see *Letters on Christian Doctrine*, vol. ii., "Sacrament of Penance."

CHAPTER VII

CATHOLIC DUTIES IN GENERAL

Plan.

THE plan to be adopted in the next three chapters is this : those Catholic practices will be dealt with which constitute strict obligations under pain of mortal sin. But many things will also be mentioned in connection with them that are not part of obligatory practice, but merely desirable acts of free devotion. These duties are : Prayer, the hearing of Mass, the use of Sacraments—to wit, Confession and Holy Communion, and observance of the laws of Fasting and Abstinence. In later chapters we shall review various forms of Catholic piety which are left to the unfettered choice of the individual.

General remarks.

It will be advisable to preface the detailed consideration of Catholic duties and devotional practices with one or two remarks.

The sense of proportion.

In a preceding chapter a haphazard list of these practices was given, and it was observed that they were of very different grades of importance in the Catholic system. At first, the convert sometimes suffers from a *lack of sense of proportion.* Like every fervent beginner, keen to master all the details of his trade, the neophyte does not always stop to consider what is of primary importance, what he *must* do, and what he *may* do if he so pleases ; but he wants to do it *all*, and all at *once !*

Essentials first.

This propensity, though most satisfactory as a sign of earnestness, needs to be restrained. The

rule should be : essentials first and non-essentials afterwards—by degrees, and in duly regulated measure.[1] On entering the happy home of the Church, the convert is, as it were, seated at his Mother's table laden with all sorts of substantials and dainties. Besides the bare necessaries of life (duties), an immense variety of spiritual luxuries lie spread out before him (devotional practices). But any attempt to partake of every dish indiscriminately at the first meal would be rash, and calculated to produce in the spiritual order something analogous to surfeit, indigestion, and then a reaction against all food, or nausea. "All things are lawful, but not all things are expedient." There are differences of capacity for spiritual things between soul and soul. God does not develop the gift of piety in everyone to the same degree. It is well, therefore, for each one to ascertain as far as possible the measure of his spiritual strength. If this cannot be done alone, let the aid of the confessor be invoked. There is a Latin saying : "Make haste slowly." Consultation with one's spiritual guide will serve as a safeguard from self-delusion. There will then be less danger of error in judging whether one inclines too much to haste, or, on the contrary, to slackness.

[1] Only one exception to this rule seems desirable—viz., the practice of frequent and Daily Communion—owing to the urgent *recommendation* of this free act by the Holy See to "all the faithful."

CHAPTER VIII

CATHOLIC DUTIES IN PARTICULAR

In this chapter we shall deal with such practices as form part of Catholic *duties* binding under sin ; but many points will be added in connection with them that are *optional*, and not binding under sin : as Meditation, *amount* of Prayer, *daily* Mass or Communion, etc.

Prayer.

Prayer necessary.

Prayer to God is a *grave obligation*. Notice, I do not say any *definite quantity* of prayer. But the creature of God who altogether neglects prayer fails in a serious duty. For he omits to acknowledge his dependence upon his Maker and Lord, in "Whom we live and move, and are."[1] For this reason prayer as a general duty has been placed here among the essentials of Catholic life, albeit certain forms of prayer, presently to be mentioned, as we shall see later, are not of obligation. Attendance at Holy Mass is the best and highest of all prayers. At present, however, let us confine ourselves to forms of prayer in common use, which are always within our power. Sometimes Mass is not.

Daily prayer.

Morning and Night Prayers.—One cannot say that there is any command of God or of the Church obliging us to pray every morning and night. Hence it cannot be stated in general that to omit doing so in an individual instance is even a venial sin. Though the case is conceivable in

[1] Acts xvii. 28.

which a man might be unable to keep from mortal sin unless he prayed daily, yet this would not prove that he must pray in the morning or at night, rather than in the afternoon. On the other hand, in a vast number of cases the person who passes whole days prayerless will not succeed in resisting sin. Putting the question of strict obligation aside, it is the universal practice of all earnest Catholics to pray daily, and, as a rule, both morning and night. For the busy and hard-working it is a case of praying the first thing on rising and before retiring to rest, or of omitting prayer altogether.

A good saying.

The following excellent passage from one of the late Mr. Spurgeon's *Farm Sermons* deserves to be quoted in the present connection : " Private prayer should be regularly offered in the morning and in the evening. We cannot do without set seasons for drawing near to God. To look in the face of man without having first seen the face of God is very dangerous : to go straight into the world without locking up one's heart and giving the key to God is to leave it open to all sorts of spiritual vagrants. . . . It may be said : 'We can pray at all times.' I know we *can !* but I fear that those who do not pray at stated hours seldom pray at all."

Night prayers prepare for death.

To which as Catholics we may add—as regards evening prayer—that it is well not to trust ourselves to that image of death, sleep, without calling ourselves to account for our actions, and asking Our Lord's pardon for the sins of the day that is closed. To many a Catholic soul, the brief nightly examination of conscience and act of contrition has been the only immediate preparation for being " manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ " to answer for the deeds done in the body.[1]

[1] 2 Cor. v. 10.

These prayers, moreover, will lose half their energy unless said with undivided attention and kneeling (except this last be prevented by sickness or some other reasonable cause). Thus morning prayers said while completing the toilette —when there is no necessity for this—are not to be commended, nor—under the same proviso—night prayers said between the sheets. There may be little in a name, but there is a good deal in a reverent posture during prayer. The *whole man* should worship. His material part ought to correspond with the interior and mental part, so that he may worship "in truth" as the human being he is, as well as "in spirit." The soul, owing to its intimate union with the body, is greatly influenced by the external circumstances of its fleshly tabernacle. Thus when smartly dressed, a smug feeling of self-content and of benevolence towards all the world is apt to pervade us. We are less anxious for notice when our garments are shabby. So, too, as to postures. The suppliant position of the body aids the soul in reverencing and humbling itself before the Great God. Attention and reverence.

Here we are speaking about prayer of very moderate length. When prayer is prolonged, we may need to adopt a more restful position in order to perform the duty better. No less a mortified person than St. Teresa said that moderate comfort of body (she did not say lolling in lazy attitudes) was necessary for praying well. (A hint to certain bench-makers!) This sainted foundress of one of the severest Reforms in the Church made it a subject of earnest prayer that the Carmelite woollen habit might be free from the incursion of certain noxious insects, so that her daughters might not be disturbed at their orisons. Then, again, there are the weak, and delicate, and growing children. Bodily comfort and prayer.

Prayer amid work.

It would be puritanical to consider it improper ever to pray except on one's knees or in church. The lifting up of our hearts to God in the midst of daily occupations and pleasures is an excellent practice. The worker who prays to God or to His Saints while toiling, or walking through the busy thoroughfares, is offering the sweetest incense in His sight, and in a measure atoning for the foul miasma of vice which ascends daily and nightly from the seething mass of humanity. The above insistence on reverence of posture, consequently, is intended chiefly for set prayer at fixed times, as well as of shorter duration.

Choice of Prayers.—There is no appointed form of morning and night prayers. This is left to the choice of each member of the laity. Many good forms are to be found in Catholic Prayer-Books published with ecclesiastical sanction. Unlike most of our non-Catholic neighbours, we have a considerable variety of choice in this matter. It is otherwise with the public services of the Church. These are regulated, of course, by authority, though in what are called "popular services" the priest in charge is at liberty to employ devotions in the mother tongue which seem suitable and have episcopal or papal approval for public use.

Meaning of Meditation.

Mental Prayer, or Meditation.—These terms apply to prayer which for the most part finds no vocal expression, but is confined to the mind. It consists in pondering over some truth of religion, some text of Holy Writ, or an incident in the life of Christ, of our Blessed Lady, or of the Saints—reasoning upon the subject, praying over it, drawing practical conclusions from it for the bettering of our daily conduct, and entering into reverent but familiar converse with God, or with the heavenly personages who form the subject of our meditations, according as our hearts may

prompt us. Vocal utterance of what the mind is pondering is not *forbidden*, as for instance in the way of aspirations or pious ejaculations.

The *utility* of this practice for advancement in the spiritual life can hardly be exaggerated. By its means the truths of faith, which should animate our daily conduct, are more deeply impressed from day to day upon the mind, and gradually become part and parcel of ourselves. It also raises the mind above the petty cares and troubles of earth, resting it in God, strengthening it, and enabling it to face the difficulties and trials of life with courage and patience.

We have given above a very brief description of mental prayer in the common form that is suitable to the generality. There are other types of mental prayer of a more abstruse nature, but which it would not be advisable to deal with here.

Difficulty met.

There are not a few persons who find great difficulty in sustained thought and reflection of the above kind. If the assistance of a book containing meditation matter more or less digested does not suffice to remove it, they will find in the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* other simpler forms or "methods" of prayer which are easier to master, and combine the advantages of mental and vocal prayer.[1]

A non-Catholic Press testimony.

As a proof that appreciation of the advantages attached to Meditation is not confined to Catholics, the following extract may prove interesting:

"Every man who wants to live a holier life . . . should devote some part of the day to solitude, should—that is—save an hour or half an hour each day from the cares and amusements and

[1] The Catholic Truth Society supplies cheaply some excellent meditation books—that is, books supplying matter for meditation—divided up into brief headings or "points."

worries of this life, and devote it to the repossession of his own soul. That such a habit is good for men cannot possibly be doubted. We may drug our souls with the busy idleness of a hurried life. We say 'idleness' advisedly—for most men who lead the ordinary active business life leave their souls in complete idleness. They hurry and they rush—they are occupied with a thousand questions great and small: but they never once possess their souls before they die. If a man is to give his soul its rights, he must allow it time in which, untroubled by bodily activity and by mere mental activity, it may use its wings and travel unfettered in its own region—the region of pure thought and meditation. To most men the thought of an hour, or even half an hour, with nothing to do suggests torture. If they have nothing to do or to read, nothing—as they would say—to occupy their minds, they feel utterly lost. This fact is a proof how much men need to acquire the habit of meditation. The wings of the soul have become so stiff from want of use that the mere thought of stretching them out is painful. The habit of meditation has—for most people—to be acquired by conscious effort. But it is a habit well worth acquiring: and when once acquired it greatly strengthens and vivifies man's nature.

"But what should a man think about in such meditation? . . . He should dwell on the great issues of life and eternity, and of human conduct. He should consider in its widest aspect his duty to God and his neighbour. . . . It is through meditation a man must train and develop his moral being and strengthen his soul. It has been truly said that the greatest things that have been done in the world have been due to the victories of the spirit. But to gain the victories of the spirit meditation is as necessary as is a base to

an army in the field. No man who wishes to do the best by himself spiritually can afford to neglect meditation. . . ."[1]

Vocal Prayer.

Meaning.

Prayer is called "vocal" which is uttered with the lips (as well as the heart) audibly or inaudibly, and either according to some generally received form, or *ex tempore*. The term is sometimes applied in a more restricted sense to prayers recited out of a book, or by heart on a rosary or chaplet.

A pious nuisance.

N.B.—When a person prays vocally care should be taken to be quite inaudible, so as not to disturb one's neighbours. These are not helped in their devotions by a constant "stage-whisper" at their side.

Prayer-Books.

Catholic Prayer-Books in the mother tongue offer an indefinite variety of vocal prayers. These, however, are by no means of equal merit. I mean as regards their substance, not their literary style, to which Almighty God, one may suppose, does not attach any great importance. Of course, forms of prayer should be shunned which do not appear bearing the sanction of episcopal authority as a guarantee of their orthodoxy. It will not be easy nowadays to find a devotional manual lacking such approval. But it is possible to meet with leaflets, printed by individual enterprise, which bear no mark of having received ecclesiastical sanction. Then, manuscript prayers or devotions are sometimes propagated by private persons, which may, or may not, be conformable to the spirit or teaching of the Catholic Church, though the circulator be innocent of any evil intention in the matter. Some of these are mere superstitions, which should be promptly consigned to the fire; for instance, "The Endless

[1] A writer in the *Spectator*, Jan. 11, 1898.

Chain Prayer," and an equally objectionable devotion to St. Joseph of the "snowball" type—both of which have repeatedly been exposed in the Catholic Pulpit and Press.[1]

A plentiful store.

The Best Prayers.—First comes the "Our Father"—the prayer made by Our Lord Himself. After that the "Hail Mary"—addressed in God's name to Mary. partly by His Angelic messenger, Gabriel, partly by St. Elizabeth—the second half of the prayer being an extremely ancient petition to Our Lady added by the Church of Christ. Then there are the Creeds, or summaries of Catholic doctrines of varying completeness, the best known being the Apostles' Creed. The longer Creed of Nicea (Nicene Creed), drawn up to meet the errors of the times by the General Council of Nicea, is recited by the priest at Mass on Sundays and certain other feasts, immediately after the first Gospel. The Creed called "Athanasian"—after St. Athanasius—which is a constant bone of contention in the Anglican Church, is confined to the public chanting or private recital of the Divine Office, binding daily every cleric who has reached the grade of Subdeacon, under pain of grievous sin.[2]

Another time-honoured prayer of praise is the "Glory be to the Father," etc.

[1] They may be recognized by their being sent anonymously by post, and containing minute "directions for use" and for further circulation by the victimized recipient. If the whole thing is meant for a joke. it is certainly a very bad one. And, unfortunately, the credulous or scrupulous are apt to take the matter seriously. The superstition was condemned by Rome in the seventeenth century.

[2] There is also the Creed of Pope Pius IV., used by the convert when making the Profession of Faith on reception into the Church. It includes those doctrines which were denied by the Protestant Reformers, and were defined by the Council of Trent. A shorter form, approved by Rome 1859), is often used in its place at receptions. The above Creed, however, does not appear in Catholic devotions or services.

So far no mention has been made of the Psalms in the Bible—those unrivalled praises of God—though obviously taking precedence of any form of prayer fashioned by men. For these songs of worship come to us directly inspired by the Holy Ghost.

'The flesh-pots.'

In the Catholic English version they will doubtless seem to the convert shorn of much of their literary beauty. It cannot be questioned that the approved Anglican translation is superior *as a specimen of literature*. But the convert, animated by the true Catholic spirit, will attach far greater value to the guarantee afforded by the infallible Church that the translation approved by her is faithful, than to the gratification of his æsthetic sense, and will repress all sighing after the flesh-pots of Egypt.

Psalms.

Such psalms or canticles as the *De profundis* (Ps. cxxix.; Prot. Ps. cxxx.), so constantly used as a prayer for the dead, the Magnificat, and the introductory Psalms of Vespers for the Sunday and for Compline, will be found in very many popular books of devotion. A *Vespers Book*, properly so called, contains a large number of psalms, which are sometimes placed side by side with the English rendering. Of course, a Douay Bible may be used instead.

Hymns.

As for hymns, the Catholic liturgy is peculiarly rich in this form of praise. We refer to the official hymns, used either in the Divine Office, or as "Sequences" in the Mass—occurring immediately after the Gradual—that is to say, between the reading of the Epistle and Gospel. They are indefinitely superior in solidity and doctrinal value to (and, generally, in literary merit also) the vast majority of popular Catholic hymns in use, though it would be a purist excess to depreciate the practical value of the latter as aids to devotion.

Stolen goods.

The convert will no doubt soon recognize many of these liturgical hymns as old friends, since not a few of them have been borrowed (without acknowledgment) from the Catholic Church by the Established Church of England, having in most cases escaped the mutilations committed by the Reformers upon the old Catholic liturgy of pre-Reformation England. They survive as witnesses to the sad apostacy of the sixteenth century.

Among the hymns and sequences in commoner use, we may notice *Veni Creator Spiritus* (Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come), *Veni Sancte Spiritus* (Come, Holy Ghost, send down those beams), *Pange lingua . . . Corporis* (Sing, my tongue, the Saviour's glory), the *Te Deum* (St. Ambrose), the two hymns to Our Lady, the *Ave Maris Stella* (Hail, bright star of ocean), and the *Stabat Mater* (By the cross her station keeping). The *Adeste fideles* (Christmas hymn) and the *Adoro Te devote* (Thee prostrate I adore) of St. Thomas Aquinas, though frequently used, do not form part of the official rites of the Church. The *Lauda Sion* (Sion, thy Redeemer praising), the Sequence of the Mass for Corpus Christi day, also by St. Thomas, an unique specimen of combined poetical expression and precise dogmatic statement, is in less common use than it deserves. The same may be said of the *Dies Iræ*, the Sequence to the *Requiem* Mass, or Mass for the Dead.

Litanies.—A Litany is one of the most solemn forms of supplication in Church use ; hence the strict supervision exercised by the Holy See over this kind of prayer. Catholic Prayer-Books contain a number of Litanies, which, if duly authorized by Bishops, are suitable as *private* devotions. But for use in *public*, Rome approves only of a very few Litanies. There are the following : The

Litanies of the Saints, of the Holy Name of Jesus, of Loreto (Litany of Our Lady), the Litany for the Commendation of a Departing Soul (also included in the *Bona Mors* Devotions),[1] the Litany of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus sanctioned in 1899 by Leo XIII. at the petition of the Bishop of Marseilles, and, lastly, that of St. Joseph, authorized for public use by Pius X., March 18, 1909.

From the above imperfect review of the devotional treasures possessed by the Catholic Church —considered only in her Western portion—it is clear that no one need go out of his way to find excellent forms of vocal prayer, still less to invent new and fanciful ones. But as tastes and grades of culture differ widely, prayer-forms composed by private individuals, such as one finds in standard English books of devotion, cannot be well dispensed with. Popular hymns are also highly serviceable.

What Prayer-Book to choose.

With regard to the selection of a first Prayer-Book, the convert is advised to choose one designed for general purposes, and not mainly devoted to some peculiar aspect of Catholic devotion, such as devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, to the Sacred Heart, to Our Lady, or to particular Saints. His or her earliest want is a manual extending through the whole range of spiritual needs, from rising to bedtime, from year's end to year's end, and from infancy to death—such as *The Garden of the Soul, The Path to Heaven,* and others.

The *Roman Missal.*

The more educated may be recommended to have a *Roman Missal* (whether wholly in Latin or adapted to English readers) for use during the Holy Sacrifice. It is obvious that there could not be a better way of joining in the Sacred Mysteries than following every word and act of the Bride

[1] See p. 298.

of Christ, represented by the Celebrant, while she pays this supreme tribute of Divine worship. Then, for the communicant, what better form of preparation can be devised than that which the Church puts into the mouth of her minister for the purpose?[1] When, after mastering the outlines of Catholic devotion, the convert begins to feel an attraction for some particular form of devotion approved by the Church—like those mentioned just now—it will be time to supplement the more general manual of prayers with specializing ones, according to the devotional bent developed under the action of the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit breatheth where he wills."[2] Of course every Catholic manual supplies a certain amount for special devotions; and it is by employing these that the recent convert will discover his particular attraction. No reference need be made here to the subject of *indulgenced* vocal prayers—a point which will be more properly discussed in a later chapter.

[1] Readers of French will find an admirable development of this suggestion in "La Sainte Messe—entendue pour communier tous les jours," by Dom Eugène Vandeur, O.S.B. (Maredsous, Namur, Belgium), being a paper read at the Cologne Eucharistic Congress, 1909. English edition, 1s. 6d. (Burns Oates and Washbourne).

[2] John iii. 8.

CHAPTER IX

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

WITHOUT pretending in these pages to give full instruction on this point of doctrine and worship —as the convert must be supposed to have received the same before admission into the Church —it may be profitable to drive home one or two leading thoughts concerning the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. *The* act of worship.

1. Sacrifice is the *highest act of Divine worship* of which man is capable : it is the one form of worship which cannot lawfully be paid except to God alone. Hence the obligation of assisting at Mass on Sundays—the day specially allotted to Divine worship—and on other days assigned by the Church to the same purpose.

2. Holy Mass is not a mere "service" in the popular sense. For that term implies necessarily the attendance of a congregation, without whose co-operation the public service would be almost meaningless. The Mass, on the contrary, has its own full and intrinsic worth before God which is independent of attendance on the part of the faithful. It is in itself a great and stupendous Event—a great and stupendous Action performed, in our behalf, by the Mediator of God and men, the High-Priest of the New Law, the God-Man Jesus Christ. Though we assisted at if (with attention) without saying any prayers of our own—a thing to be certainly avoided— Unique character.

the substantial spiritual benefit to us would remain. For the power of benefiting our souls lies essentially *in the Mass*, and not in our personal acts during it, yet if the latter be added—as they ought—we derive *greater* benefit.

Meaning and priceless value.

3. In Holy Mass our loving Eldest Brother gathers us, who have become through "the grace of adoption of sons" His younger brothers and sisters, around Him, while He offers in our name His all-pleasing sacrifice. As the Second Adam and Head of the human race, He fulfils for us by means of this oblation of Himself those duties towards the Godhead which we are hopelessly incompetent to satisfy—adoration, thanksgiving, propitiation for our sins, and petition for our spiritual and temporal needs. What a priceless treasure is Holy Mass! It meets *all our greatest wants* in this land of temporary banishment![1]

How Old England loved it.

Can we consider that, in the dark days of Elizabethan persecution, English Catholics gladly risked fortune, liberty, and life in order to preserve this mine of untold spiritual wealth and to harbour and support the consecrated dispensers of its Divine Riches! Oh! let us learn from those brave confessors and glorious martyrs for the Catholic Faith of Old England to set the highest possible value upon hearing Holy Mass, though it be at the cost of some inconvenience or sacrifice of our own ease. This is the mark of the solid Catholic.

The Forms and Parts of the Mass.

Forms of ritual at Mass.

One of the earliest difficulties of the convert is *understanding the Mass*. By this I do not mean the difficulty of understanding the *language*

[1] See *Our Divine Saviour*, a volume of sermons by the Right Reverend Dr. Hedley, O.S.B., containing beautiful discourses on the Mass (Burns Oates and Washbourne).

in which it is said, but of following its parts and ceremonies intelligently. There is High Mass, Missa Cantata, Mass with singing during it, and then Low Mass as witnessed on ordinary week-days at different hours of the morning. All this is a bit confusing at first. So let us begin by disentangling the above skein.

High Mass.—This is Mass with the greatest amount of ceremonial adornment. Three sacred ministers preside, being aided by various assistants who are generally taken from the laity. Then there is the choir, which renders certain portions of the liturgy, which are also recited by the priests at the Altar. The priest offering the Sacrifice is called the Celebrant, the two other sacred ministers assisting him are called Deacon and Subdeacon respectively, and each has his own special functions.

Missa Cantata.—When priests are scarce—as happens in small missions—the Deacon and Subdeacon are dispensed with, the Celebrant combining their functions with his own. The part taken by the choir is the same as at High, or "Solemn," Mass.

Mass with Singing (*Missa cum Cantu*).—But sometimes a shorter rite is desired; for both in Solemn Mass and Missa Cantata the function is considerably lengthened by the fact that the ceremonies are more elaborate and the ministers wait in silence (usually seated) till the choir has finished singing the portions allotted to it. The Mass with singing takes no longer than an ordinary Low Mass. The ceremonies of both are identical —except a sermon be interpolated after the first Gospel—and the priest pursues his holy work regardless of the voluntary pieces sung by the choir at intervals. Historically, it seems that Mass was first celebrated in a "Solemn" form, and that Low Mass as now said any day of the

week in our churches was a later development made necessary by the extension of the Faith and the multiplication of churches. But whatever be the amount of ceremony, the constitutive parts of the Mass are *unvarying*. They form the substance of the act, however elaborate may be the ceremonial adornments.

Mass analyzed.

It is these constitutive parts that the convert needs to distinguish :

1. The introductory part of the Mass—*i.e.*, from its beginning at the foot of the Altar to the reading (or singing) of the first Gospel at the left-hand extremity of the altar (or to the Credo, when it follows the Gospel). 2. The beginning of the *Sacrifice proper*, or Offertory. 3. The Consecration of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. 4. The Communion, or consumption of the Eucharist by the priest. 5. The concluding portion of the Mass, ending with the Gospel of St. John (John i. 1-14), or some special one demanded by the Church's calendar. The *English* prayers said (at Low Mass) after the Celebrant has descended to the foot of the altar, are not any part of the Mass, but ordered by the Pope in recent times, and liable to alteration by him.

Of the above five portions, 2, 3, and 4 form the *substance* of the Sacrifice. This will be more readily understood if we recall certain of the old Jewish sacrifices which prefigured the Sacrifice of the New Law. First, the victim was selected and *offered* for sacrifice (Offertory), then the victim was *slain* on the altar (Consecration), and lastly the victim was *consumed*, or otherwise destroyed (Communion). The main difficulty is to perceive anything in the Mass corresponding to a slaying or destruction of the Divine Victim. It is not part of our present task to offer a full doctrinal explanation of the Mass, which has either been

given already to the convert, or may be completed by reference to books of instruction.[1] Suffice it here to point out that the practical force of the two *separately pronounced* forms of consecration, "This is My Body" and "This is the chalice of My Blood," etc., taken according to the surface meaning of the words used, imply the presence *apart* of Body and Blood—a state of things ordinarily involving *death*. Moreover, Our Lord, in becoming truly present under the appearances of bread and wine, assumes a condition in which —for all human purposes—he is *as if* dead, and so submits to a kind of *moral* deterioration, or destruction. This much by the way. Our present object is rather to enable the convert to analyze the rite of the Mass than to discuss the underlying doctrines.

How to recognize the parts of Mass.

How may these several main divisions of the sacrificial rite be identified at sight. The offertory begins when the priest, after the uncovering of the chalice—by himself, or, at High Mass, by his assisting minister—holds up the "paten," or small plate, containing the unconsecrated wafer of bread, offering it to God, and then receives the wine, mixed with a few drops of water[2] into the "chalice," or cup.

[1] *E.g.*, see *Letters on Christian Doctrine*, vol. ii., p. 206.

[2] A practice so venerable as to be traced to Apostolic ordinance. As the beautiful prayer with which the celebrant accompanies the mixing shows, the mingling of a few small drops of water with the wine represents the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, by which the weaker nature of man was united with the stronger Divine nature—symbolized by the wine—and was transformed, so to say, into it through grace. St. Peter teaches us that, by grace, we are "made partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4). Only a very minute quantity of water is added, since it is essential for valid consecration that the liquid should be what is, in human estimation, *wine*. Thus a Catholic priest would not be free to carry out the instruction of a late Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Temple), who, in reply to an objection to wine at Communion made by a correspondent in behalf of teetotallers, said that, while Anglican Bishops

The Consecration is still more easily recognized. Between the offertory and the actual consecration of the bread, the bell, or gong, is rung by the server (if he does not forget!) on two occasions: first, at the *Sanctus*, three distinct rings, and, after an interval, a second time, with a single ring. This *last* serves as a warning-bell for the Consecration. Soon after it, the priest bends low over the altar and—another sign—the congregation bow their heads, and then the bell is rung again with three separate rings. Now, the actual Consecration of the bread is pronounced inaudibly *immediately before this bell rings*, the priest at once kneeling to adore Our Lord now present before him. Then follows the Second Consecration—of the wine—the order of events being the same as at the First Consecration—of the bread.

The Communion, or consumption of the Holy Victim, may be identified by the words, uttered aloud three times by the priest before receiving: *Domine, non sum dignus*, etc. ("Lord, I am not worthy," etc.), the bell being rung at each utterance, after which the priest makes a sign of the Cross in front of him with the Sacred Host, and, bending over the altar, gives himself Communion. Then, after a short prayerful pause, and with similar rites, he consumes the Precious Blood out of the chalice. It is at this point that Communion is given to the laity—when the Eucharist is administered during the course of Mass.

Once these elementary notions of the rite have been mastered, it will not be difficult to follow the Mass in any of its ceremonial forms with a

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could not sanction any departure from the ordinance of Christ, and allow the use of any other liquid at the Communion Service in place of wine, yet people *might put as much water to the wine as they thought fit!*

book, at all events after hearing it a few times, and especially if helped by some friend at one's side.

Days on which Mass is of Obligation under Pain of Mortal Sin.

1. All Sundays in the year. *This is universal throughout the world.*

2. All Holy-days "of Obligation." These vary a little in different countries.

In England and Wales.—New Year's Day (Jan. 1), the Feast of the Epiphany (Jan. 6), Ascension Day (Thursday following the Fifth Sunday after Easter), Corpus Christi, the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul (June 29), Our Lady's Assumption (Aug. 15), the Feast of All Saints (Nov. 1), Christmas Day (Dec. 25).

In Scotland.—The same as in England, *with the addition* of the Feast of St. Andrew, Patron of the country (Nov. 30).

In Ireland.—As in England, *with the addition* of St. Patrick's Day (Mar. 17).

In the United States of America.—The Catholic Directory for 1918 gives the following as the Holy Days of Obligation: The Circumcision (Jan. 1), Ascension Day, the Assumption (Aug. 15), All Saints (Nov. 1), the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8), Christmas Day (Dec. 25).

About Good Friday.

It may seem strange that Good Friday—the Day of Redemption—should not be included among days of *Obligation*. But it is to be noticed that the obligation imposed by the Church is attached to the *hearing of Mass*, and to nothing

else. Now, on Good Friday there is no Mass—the Church wishing to concentrate the attention of her children upon the Sacrifice of Mount Calvary, of which the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass is the commemoration and extension. The Morning Office is, indeed, called the "Mass" of the Pre-Sanctified: but this means, in practice, that the Celebrant merely consumes a remaining part of what was *previously* "sanctified" (consecrated) at the Mass on Maundy Thursday, and has since been reserved with special solemnity at the separate Altar of Repose, for the adoration of the faithful. Thus the Good Friday Morning Office is a priest's Communion, not a Mass.[1] Doubtless the Church deemed no moral compulsion necessary for assembling in spirit all true Christian believers around the death-bed of that loving Eldest Brother Who died for their sins.

Again, though All Souls Day (Nov. 2)—when the Church commemorates and prays for her departed children—is not a day of Obligation, nor appears even in the list of days of devotion given below, our charity for the souls of our dead will surely prompt us to join, if possible, in the Holy Sacrifice of Propitiation, "that they may be loosed from their sins,"[2] and quickly exchange purgatorial pains for the joys of Heaven. Many of them we may have known and loved, or perhaps injured, while in life. Let us do all we can to procure for them that blissful sight of "the living God" for which they yearn so unutterably, even "as the hart panteth after the fountains of living water."[3] Then we shall have less cause to fear that when our own turn comes, and "the hand of the Lord hath touched"[4] us

[1] It is not the custom for anyone except the Celebrant to receive Holy Communion on Good Friday unless in danger of death.

[2] 2 Mac. xii. 46. [3] Ps. xli. 2. [4] Job xix. 21.

also, we shall in turn be forgotten on our "bed of sorrow."[1]

There is another class of days, called "feasts of devotion," upon which there is no obligation to perform any special acts of worship, though this is *recommended*. No sin, however, attaches to their non-observance.

These Feasts of Devotion for *England and Wales* are: The Purification of Our Lady, or Candlemas Day (Feb. 2), all feasts of Apostles, the Feast of St. Gregory, Patron of England (Mar. 12), of St. Joseph, Patron of the Catholic Church (Mar. 19), the Annunciation of Our Lady (Mar. 25), the Monday and Tuesday in Easter Week and in Whit Week, on the Feasts of St. George, Patron of England (Apr. 23), of the Finding of the Holy Cross (May 3), of St. Augustine, Apostle of England (May 26), of St. John the Baptist (June 24), of St. Anne, mother of Our Lady (July 26), of St. Laurence (Aug. 10), of Our Lady's Nativity (Sept. 8), of St. Michael (Sept. 29), of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8), of the Holy Innocents (Dec. 28), and of St. Thomas of Canterbury (Dec. 29).

Daily Mass.—As there is no obligation under sin to hear Mass on Feasts of Devotion, still less can there be any for ordinary week-days. Yet those who have the opportunity are certainly recommended to perform this voluntary act of religion. It is the very best form of Morning Prayer conceivable, since, as we have seen, Holy Mass is the prayer and pleading of the Sacred Heart of the Great Mediator Himself, and, by assisting, we share in it.

A means to Daily Communion.

Moreover, attendance at ordinary Daily Mass secures us the opportunity for *daily* receiving "our daily Bread" in Holy Communion, accord-

[1] Ps. xl. 4.

ing to "the desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church," as Pope Pius X. declares it to be.[1] Not, however, that Daily Communion is of obligation any more than Daily Mass, "most salutary" though the practice be, according to the Holy Father's recent teaching.

Redeeming time.

Those who enter the Catholic Church in adult age, or, it may be, when life is far advanced, are apt to lament the wasted years of an unsacrificial and unsacramental past. Such will doubtless see in Daily Mass and reception of the true Body and Blood of Christ the best means of making up for lost time. Our Lord is the Master of His own Sacraments, and is able through them to make up the heavy arrears of grace which will very commonly have been the misfortune rather than the fault of the convert.

Postures at Mass.

Way of Assisting at Mass.—The reference here is to bodily *attitude*, not to devotional methods.[2] The ceremonial at the altar is minutely—most minutely—regulated by the Church. But as the laity take no personal part in these ceremonial actions, it happens that customs differ slightly in different countries with respect to posture at the various stages of the Mass. In England the following represents the common practice at Low Mass: From the beginning of the Mass to the beginning of the Gospel (*i.e.*, when the book is moved from the right to the left extremity of the altar for the first time), remain *kneeling*. *Stand* at the Gospel, and also during the *Credo*,[3] which follows at once, if it is recited at all. When the priest has turned to the people and back again towards the altar, *sit*. When the first bell rings, *kneel*, and remain kneeling till

[1] Decree on Frequent and Daily Communion, third paragraph.

[2] For these, see Prayer-Books, or *The Method of St. Leonard of Port Maurice*, highly to be recommended.

[3] This is an English practice.

the priest has drunk from the chalice at his Communion.[1] Then sit till the priest has turned round a *second* time to the people, previous to giving the blessing, which is to be received *kneeling:* then *rise* and *stand* during the reading of the last Gospel. If the latter be the ordinary one—from St. John, chap. i.—*kneel* with the priest at words "And the Word was made flesh," and *remain kneeling* while answering the English prayers recited after Mass.

In case of need sit down.

Of course, if fatigue or ill-health prevent so much kneeling, there is no harm nor irreverence whatever in sitting down, nor has anyone a right to be shocked thereat. Only it would require some more than ordinary inconvenience to excuse one from kneeling during the time of the *Consecration*. Should this be necessary for a really serious cause, at all events some marked external reverence of posture is strongly to be recommended so as to avoid giving disedification—*e.g.*, a profound inclination of the head. Another time when there should be a specially good reason for not kneeling is at the *Domine, non sum dignus*, and thenceforward till the priest has received Communion in both kinds. The most *sacred* part of the Mass is from the first ringing of the bell —at the words "Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus"— till after the Priest's Communion.

High Mass.

At High Mass (or Missa Cantata) the main difference is that it is customary to be seated whenever the priests are—as, for instance, while the Choir is singing the *Gloria* or *Credo*. This does not mean that the congregation *sits only* when the sacred ministers do: for, with the exceptions just given, the postures are the same as at Low Mass.

[1] And while Communion is distributed.

CHAPTER X

THE SACRAMENTS

As the convert will have had explained to him before reception, there are *seven* Sacraments in the Christian dispensation, by means of which the fruits of Our Lord's Passion and Death are applied to the soul for its varied spiritual needs.

The Sacraments are specially efficacious as means of grace, because they either restore grace, if it has been forfeited by mortal sin, or strengthen and increase it in the soul if already existing there.

Efficacy inherent.

The main excellence of the Sacraments consists in the fact that, except the soul put an essential obstacle to their operation, they *infallibly* produce their effect, not in dependence upon the devout dispositions of the receiver, but of their own Christ-given virtue.

Wrong views of Sacraments.

Those, particularly, who come to the Church from Anglicanism need to grasp the true idea of Catholic Sacraments. Previous training disposes them to regard Sacramental efficacy from a subjective instead of an objective standpoint. Let me explain. By looking at Confession or Holy Communion subjectively, I mean gauging the fruit of either according to the spiritual experiences or movements of the soul which either produces, or according to the degree of sensible comfort, or fervent emotion felt in the use of them.

To illustrate. A person goes to Confession, tells his sins, is given his penance, and then, without a word, the priest imparts absolution, and bids him go in peace. To him this seems most unsatisfactory. For he looked for some words of counsel or comfort (though he gave no hint that he needed any), and he feels that his confession has been more or less in vain. The silent confessor.

Or, in the case of Communion, a convert is present at some solemn Church ceremonial, say at High Mass on Maundy Thursday morning. The acolytes and choir-boys are seen going to Communion after the Deacon and Subdeacon, having had their attention engaged, to the time of Communion, with ceremonial details, and, after their Communion, with the rest of the ritual. What good, our friend is inclined to ask, can they derive from communicating under circumstances so distracting? Where is the sacred calm, the absorbed recollection, "the listening attitude" of the communicant, which appears so essential in the Real Presence of the Master? There has not been time for so much as a few minutes' sustained converse between the receiver and his Lord! Communion in church functions.

In both these instances we have an example of the subjective error. The foundation of this error lies in not appreciating the *objective* virtue possessed by Our Lord's Sacraments, their intrinsic power to benefit the soul that places no positive hindrance to their operation, quite independently of any feelings, emotions, listenings, or communings. It is a sort of human vanity in the spiritual order by which the soul sets far more store upon what it wants to do with God than on what God is doing for it through the mighty efficacy of the Sacraments. The inherent virtue of Sacraments.

The objective value of these instruments of grace is set forth in the theological statement *Ex opere operato*.

that Sacraments sanctify the soul *ex opere operato*. That is to say, that, except the candidate put some essential obstacle to the action of a Sacrament, according to its particular character, the mere correct administration of the rite infallibly confers the sanctifying effect assigned to it by Our Lord. The production, or non-production, of that substantial effect does not depend at all upon the pious co-operation of the receiver, beyond that which may have been in the first instance necessary for removing essential obstacles. All that additional devotion can do is to widen somewhat the margin of benefit derived. But even this extra fruit does not demand that the pious industry of the receiver should be self-chosen. Hence, a reverent attention to the ceremonial prescribed for Maundy Thursday will serve the communicant as well as, nay, better than, insistence on listenings and communings which would probably result in choir-boys or others marring the beauty of Divine worship and interfering with the devotion of the worshippers.

"Confessor said nothing."

Similarly, with regard to Confession. The objective value of the Sacrament is this, that if we confess sincerely and are sorry, all our iniquities, be they "red as scarlet," are made "whiter than snow" in the Precious Blood of the Redeemer. In other words, what we go to Confession for chiefly is to tell our sins and obtain Our Lord's pardon for the same. That is the main business. Can one overrate its greatness! What words the priest may address to us are relatively insignificant, however helpful and comforting; nor is there any intention here to deny their value or occasional necessity. But to confess less often, or—worse—to drop Confession merely because the priest "seems to take such little interest in me," or is "unsympathetic," would be to fall into the subjective way of viewing Sacraments

and to forfeit the kernel for the sake of the shell. It would show a sad lack of the spirit of *faith*. What are the "sympathetic" words of the priest compared to his message of pardon: "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee," which perhaps close the gates of Hell to the penitent and open to him those of Heaven?

Advice and encouragement are valuable, and perhaps are sometimes too sparingly given; but let us look at things in their proper proportions!

Example. The inherent efficacy of Sacraments is strikingly exhibited in the case of the unconscious dying. If the benefit of these means of grace depended upon the devout concurrence of the senseless invalid, it is plain that they would be useless to him, seeing that it is out of his power to co-operate with the priest's ministration at the time. And yet if the sick person, previous to becoming unconscious, was sufficiently disposed for deriving benefit, the sacramental effect is infallibly produced in spite of his unconsciousness. It is through not understanding this wonderful quality of Our Lord's Sacraments that non-Catholics in attendance on sick Catholics are apt to see no use in sending for the priest as long as the patient is incapable of attending to prayers. So that the Catholic priest visiting public hospitals sometimes has considerable difficulty in making matrons or nurses understand that he must always be sent for to Catholics who are dangerously sick, no matter what be the nature, or stage, of the illness.

"Feelings" again! But it is not non-Catholics alone who need to realize the intrinsic virtue of Sacraments. Those fail to realize it properly who give as an excuse for not going frequently to Holy Communion that they feel more devotion when they go seldom, forgetting that Our Lord's Sacraments are far

too powerful to need the assistance of their pious emotions for benefiting their souls.

Our small share.

For, as we have seen, the most we can do by means of our personal industries is: (1) To remove any essential obstacle to the working of the Sacrament—*e.g.*, in the case of Holy Communion, by going to Confession previously in order to remove mortal sin; (2) To *increase* our receptiveness of grace by the greater perfection of our dispositions.

Among the seven Sacraments, two are in more common use—namely, the Sacrament of Penance, or Confession, and the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, or Holy Communion. It is to these two that Catholics refer when they speak of "approaching" or "going to" the Sacraments. As *both* of these constitute (ordinarily) what are called "the Easter Duty," and the fulfilment of this duty is binding upon Catholics under pain of mortal sin, we will say something about each.

Confession.

I would remind the reader, once more, that these pages do not pretend to give a full course of instructions, the latter being presupposed in the case of one who has been prepared for reception into the Church. There are, however, a few points about Confession which it may be well to emphasize.

Preparation for Confession.—Having to confess our sins in detail to the priest, it follows that we must remember them. But in order to recall our offences against God, we need to examine our consciences—that is, after thanking God for His past mercies, and begging His grace to see what has been the extent of our sinful ingratitude towards His Infinite Goodness since we last received His forgiveness in the Confessional.

Extent of Self-examination.—The convert is here supposed to know that the Divine precept of private Confession extends in strictness only to *mortal* sins, not to venial ones—however profitable it is (and customary) to mention at least our more notable venial offences. For, though venial sin be not obligatory matter for Confession, it is valid and permissible matter. Examination of conscience.

From the above it follows that examination of conscience can only be *necessary* in as far as needed for recalling *mortal* sins. Also, since the priest must have something to absolve, a moment's thought may be needed for recalling some sins, at least in a general way, even if only *venial* ones, when no mortal one has occurred—that is, if I want out of devotion to get the grace of the Sacrament. So, speaking broadly, it is in view of *mortal* sin that examination is required. But if a person is living carefully, and is not accustomed to sin mortally, then, clearly, that person is not bound to prolong the search for that which, in his case, is not likely to be found. Basis of this duty.

Those, on the contrary, who have to struggle to uproot some besetting habit of grievous sin, will need to examine more carefully. But even in their case it is *ordinary*, and not extraordinary, care which they are alone bound to take. This holds good also with those who confess at long intervals only, and hence naturally find it harder to remember all that has happened since their last Confession. They are not obliged to go on searching indefinitely in the idea that perhaps if they go on long enough another mortal sin may turn up. If they have no solid reason for thinking that this new discovery will soon occur, they may close the examination, and turn to the highly important work of exciting themselves to sincere sorrow for sin, and especially to a *firm purpose of amending them.* Given that a man has done his Habitual sinners.

duty as regards examination on the above lines, contrition and resolve to avoid sin in future are of far greater importance for benefiting by the Absolution than an arithmetically exact enumeration of sins. For the latter would be valueless without those two essentials for real repentance.

Forgotten sins.

Moreover, provided we be truly repentant, forgotten sins are forgiven along with those confessed, although, if recalled later on, and they are *clearly mortal*, we are still bound to tell them in Confession. This is a different case to that of *doubts mentioned* for whatever they may be worth, referred to above. In the present case *nothing* has been mentioned, owing to honest forgetfulness.

Telling one's sins.

Accusation of Sins.—It is not enough to bewail to the priest in vague and general phrases our "neglect of grace, our want of conformity to God's will, or our lack of gratitude to Him," etc. Such general forms of accusation amount to no more than saying that we have sinned, which may be taken for granted, or else why are we in the Confessional? *Concrete facts of sinfulness* are the proper matter for Confession. *Facts*, not *fears* or *doubts*, still less really *scrupulous fidgets*. In the case of those who are judged by the confessor to be suffering from the spiritual ailment called "scruples," doubts are best not mentioned at all, or the scrupulous sufferer will be unconsciously adding to the sins of those who are waiting interminably outside for their turn to enter the Confessional. But there is this advantage in mentioning *serious* doubts as to grievous sin. Once we have mentioned such doubts (with sorrow for any guilt there may have been), and, of course, mentioned them *as doubts*, and not as positive sins (which would be untruthful), we are relieved of all obligation to

return to the subject again, even though it should afterwards become plain to us that there was clear and positive mortal sin in the matter. Thus all worry of conscience caused by recurrence of the same doubt is obviated. The thing is done with.

Over and above the obligation of mentioning the *kind* and *number* of *mortal* offences, the telling of our sins should have certain qualities. *Brevity*, a business-like way of accusing ourselves, is most desirable. Long stories and roundabout phrases are to be avoided. What the priest needs to know is the offence, and not all sorts of trivial details as to what led up to it. Thus, in the case of an altercation, the cause of anger is immaterial, as is also a full description of the angry dialogue. Yet if some *fresh kind* of sin—for instance, blasphemous words—were committed in the process, that would need special mention.

Clearness.—This quality is only important where *mortal* sin is confessed. The confessor naturally does not wish to cross-examine more than his duty of rightly fulfilling his ministry demands. Thus, to accuse oneself of "sinful thoughts" is too vague, there being many kinds of them. Their *kind* must be stated, but not with precise *details* if contrary to chastity. Clearness is also needed in order not to leave the confessor in doubt as to whether the penitent is merely mentioning a *temptation*, or *consent* to the same. Thus, in the matter of thoughts, "I *had* revengeful thoughts" is insufficient. The point which the priest wants to know is whether you *yielded* to them, and so sinned.

Straightforwardness.—Confession is not a game of "hide and seek," as though it were the priest's affair to catch the penitent, if he is sharp enough, and the penitent's to let him know as little as possible! Such a notion would reveal a scanty

appreciation of the sacredness of Our Lord's tribunal of Penance. To one so minded one would say: "Confession is *your* duty, not the priest's—that is, not to-day. His turn comes another time. You come to Confession impelled by *Christ's* command, to seek *His* pardon communicated by *His* representative.

Confess, then, as you would to the Judge of the living and the dead—that is, as to One from Whom you can hide nothing—albeit, if foolish enough, you may succeed in deceiving His minister.

Letting self down gently.

To tell a confessor, for instance, "I have not been as kind to my neighbour as I ought," when in truth you have systematically laid yourself out, from jealousy, to make him or her extremely unhappy, sounds nicer to your self-love, but is quite different to what you must one day answer for with confusion at the tribunal of Christ! The end of Confession is not to produce as good an impression of your virtue as possible upon the priest, but to humble yourself for your lack of it. We have already seen the folly of considering the confessor's impressions at all. But even putting it at that, he is much more likely to be impressed by the transparent honesty of your avowals than by any diminished guilt which your studied phrases may deceive him into putting to your credit.

The fruits of self-humbling.

If the good of the soul be taken into account, then there can be no doubt about the superiority, as a soul-tonic, of a plain and unvarnished tale. The self-humiliation of it braces up the soul into fresh vitality, and fills it with the peace of God. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," is the word of Truth Itself.

What a sincere "purpose" means.

Purpose of Amendment.—This is really the best proof of the sincerity of our sorrow for sin. But while one may make too little of it, one may

also form an extravagant idea as to what is required for a *sincere* purpose of amendment. A purpose is something more than an inefficacious *wish to be good*. Few impenitent sinners fail to experience such a wish at times. On the other hand, a sincere purpose need not amount to a *firm conviction* that I shall never repeat the offence. It is quite compatible with considerable *fear* that I shall. Were it otherwise, what hope would there be for a sinner, who—with his flesh pierced suddenly with the fear of the Lord—confesses after years and years of slavery to some vice? Saving a miracle, could he expect the evil habit to let go its victim without a bitter fight for it? Could he, however truly penitent, reasonably *help* fearing the sinful possibilities of his weak nature, amply attested by years of sad experience?

The golden mean.

It is plain, then, that a purpose of amendment is something midway between the two extremes —that is to say, between a mere *wish* to be good, or velleity, and a fearless confidence that sin will not recur. The attitude of mind which it supposes is this: that *at the time of Confession* I be *resolved* to do my best to avoid sin and those occasions, or negligences, which I know will in all probability lead to a relapse—at the same time putting my trust in *God* (not in myself) that He will enable me to overcome temptation. It is not a question of what may happen a week hence, when—possibly—relaxation of watchfulness, a falling off in my prayers, or other causes, may combine to move me from my resolve. I must not, indeed, *intend* to fall away, any more than I can without presumption *guarantee* that I never *shall*, through human weakness and inconstancy. In short, it is not what I *fear*, but what I honestly *mean* with God's help that determines the sincerity of my purpose.

The Penance.—The "penance," which the confessor imposes by way of satisfaction, is an integral part of the Sacrament of Penance. The penitent is bound to *accept* it (unless, upon his representation, the priest may be willing to change it). *Accepting* it means *intending to fulfil it.* One may signify that intention outwardly, but that is not *necessary*, albeit very common.

Forgetting one's penance.

If the penance be omitted through forgetfulness, part of the atoning value of the Sacrament is lost, but the pardoning effect of the absolution is not impaired. Owing to their connection with a Sacrament instituted by Christ for the express purpose of undoing the effects of our personal sins committed after Baptism, the prayers or acts imposed derive from Our Lord's merits a power of satisfying Divine justice quite disproportionate to their face value, and such as they would not possess if performed of our own choice and out of connection with Confession. There is no use in substituting other prayers of our own when we forget what the priest enjoined. To save forgetfulness, it is good to perform the penance (if its nature permit) before leaving the church. But there is no law to this effect.

There would be a certain disorder, no doubt, in not fulfilling it before the *next* confession. In any case the debt is not extinguished by lapse of time.

Obligation of Confession. — The *Council of Lateran* obliges the faithful to go to Confession at least once a year. But this command supposes clear *mortal* sin to have been committed. If—for supposition's sake—we imagine the case of a Catholic who, of his own choice, has not been to Confession for a twelvemonth, and yet has committed nothing but venial sins, we must admit

that he is not *bound* to go to Confession even before receiving his Easter Communion. But this is merely theoretical. In practice, how many Catholics of the sort who pass from one end of the year to the other without committing a grievous sin, fail to go to Confession at least once during that period? Moreover, with a large majority of persons, perseverance in the state of grace on one Confession a year only, when Confession can be had more often, would be something of a *practical* impossibility. The only use, therefore, of our imaginary case is to illustrate the principle that the precept of Christ, bidding us confess our sins, is limited, strictly speaking, to sins of a *grievous* kind, and that consequently the Church does not bind where Christ has not bound, by *commanding* confession to those who have offended but venially.

Hours for Confession.—There are fixed times appointed for Confessions in our churches, and, unless people have some respectable reason to the contrary, they should apply for the Sacrament at those times.

Ordinary consideration for the priest.

It is to be remembered that priests in charge of congregations have many other duties to fulfil besides hearing Confessions. There are schools to be looked after, visits to be made among the flock, sick and dying persons to be attended, not to mention a certain amount of desk work to be got through, and the obligation of reciting the Divine Office daily to be complied with. No zealous pastor will show himself unwilling on principle to hear a Confession when applied to out of the regular hours. For the needs of souls cannot be forced into correspondence with Church notices. On the other side, it would be inconsiderate and selfish on the part of members of a congregation, particularly in a large or busy mission, to consult only their own

convenience, or—as may sometimes happen—their own laziness, or pleasure-seeking, and, without any good reason, to call the priest to the Confessional freely at all hours, perhaps just as he is sitting down tired to a meal. The mere reason of avoiding the trouble of having to *wait for my turn*, if I go to Confession at the proper time, is no reason at all, except in the case of invalids, or of very busy people who are prevented by necessary occupations, or real duties, from observing the ordinary hours for Confessions. It must be obvious to any sensible person that if this reason were a valid one by itself, every member of a congregation could allege it as an excuse for irregularity, and the result would be that when the priest attended the Confessional at the hour announced, he would be wasting his time for lack of penitents.

How often to confess.

Frequency of Confession.—Since the Church only commands Confession once a year, it follows that any greater frequency is a matter of free devotion. Greater frequency of Confession may, however, be necessary in certain cases for keeping *constantly* in the grace and friendship of God—and no Catholic should be content with less. This will be specially true of those who are strongly tempted to some form of grievous sin, and the number of such is probably considerable. One cannot state that a person who has fallen into mortal sin is bound to confess within a certain period, except, of course, within the twelvemonth in order to comply with the Easter duty. Besides, although every *mortal* sin must be submitted to priestly absolution, still, the grace of God *may* be recovered before Confession by means of an act of Perfect Contrition—that is to say, sorrow for sin based on love of God for His own sake and above all things, and not merely on His goodness *to me*. Sorrow for sin conceived out of

filial fear of God's judgment will not suffice for recovering His friendship *without Confession.* Now, it is clear that this perfect kind of sorrow is not the easiest thing in the world to conceive, and it is even less easy to feel sure of having conceived it. Hence a soul that wishes to run no spiritual risks of being summoned unexpectedly to Judgment while in sin, will seek the earliest opportunity of going to Confession. Then, again, since unconfessed mortal sin is a bar to Holy Communion, delay of Confession involves privation of the Bread of Life, and the consequent lowering of the spiritual system through want of nourishment.

Confession of frequent communicants.

A question next arises concerning those who receive Holy Communion *frequently* or *daily.* How often ought these to go to Confession?

With them, as with everyone else, the same rule holds good, namely, that Confession is never of *obligation* unless *clear mortal* sin has been committed since the last Confession and Absolution. But a soul earnest enough to communicate with frequency is not the one to be content with a rare use of the Sacrament of Penance. For the confession of venial sins—though optional—is nevertheless a great help to progress in holiness, and adds to our store of spiritual strength. It was instituted primarily for rescuing the soul from the death of mortal sin; but it has, for its secondary purpose, the increase of grace. It is in the first place a cure for mortal disease; but it also acts as a preventative.

Communion the Bread of Life.

Nevertheless, it is the Holy Eucharist, and not the Sacrament of Penance, that Our Lord has designed expressly for the special function of *sustaining and developing the supernatural life* within us from day to day. That is the "daily Bread" which we pray for in the "Our Father," at least inclusively. Our Lord says:

"He that eateth Me the same also shall live by Me."[1]

A *counsel.*

How often, then, as a matter of *counsel*, should a frequent or daily communicant go to Confession? For my part, I should *advise* every two or three weeks at the least, while the very common practice of going every week is, of course, highly to be commended. Of course, if mortal sin has been committed, it *must* be confessed before Communion is repeated. It is this restoration to the life of grace when forfeited by grievous sin which forms the primary purpose for which Our Lord compassionately instituted the Sacrament of Penance, as the Council of Trent teaches.

A vain fear.

It would be a mistake and a loss if one who was not conscious of any mortal sin abstained from the Holy Table merely because Confession was impossible, and the interval usually separating one Confession from another had expired.

[1] John vi. 58.

CHAPTER XI

HOLY COMMUNION

The Paschal precept.

As the convert already knows, the Catholic Church requires her children, under pain of grievous sin, to receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord *at least* once a year, and fixes the time for performing this grave duty; namely, *about Easter time.*

Period of fulfilment.

The period within which this duty must be fulfilled varies in different parts of the world according to the lesser or greater religious facilities enjoyed there.[1] Here are the periods allotted to different countries where English is spoken:

In English-speaking lands.

In England and Wales.—From Ash Wednesday to Low Sunday—*both* the limiting days being included in the time allowed, in this and all undermentioned periods.

In Scotland.—In the dioceses of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, of Glasgow and of Dunkeld from the First Sunday in Lent to Ascension Thursday. In the dioceses of Galloway, Aberdeen, and of Argyle and the Isles, from the First Sunday in Lent to Low Sunday.

In Ireland.—In the ecclesiastical provinces of Armagh, Cashel, and Tuam from Ash Wednesday to the octave day of the feast of SS. Peter and Paul (July 6). In the province of Dublin, from Ash Wednesday to Ascension Thursday.

[1] Generally between Palm Sunday and Low Sunday. Bishops may extend the time (Can. 859, § 2).

In the United States the period for the fulfilment of the Easter Communion is from the *First Sunday in Lent* till Trinity Sunday (*i.e.*, the Sunday following Whit Sunday), both days inclusive.

Place of fulfilment.

The former law of the Church obliging the faithful to receive Paschal Communion in their respective parish churches is no longer in force. They are indeed to be exhorted to do so. If they receive their Paschal Communion in another parish, they should take care to let their own parish priest know (Can. 859, § 3).

It is also to be noted that, in accordance with Canon 859, § 4, the precept of receiving Holy Communion remains obligatory even though It has not been received, for any reason whatever, at the prescribed time.

Sometimes there might be a certain *fitness*, for edification's sake, in going to the parish church (so called) even when not obliged ; for example, in the case of very prominent members of a congregation.

Intention to comply.

To satisfy the Easter precept, it is not necessary to *intend* to fulfil it on a particular occasion. It is enough actually to receive Communion in the state of grace, in a lawful place, and within the appointed time. For example : I decide to make my Easter Communion on the Third Sunday in Lent. But a dear friend dies suddenly a week previous to that day, and without a thought about Easter duties, I go to Communion for his soul the day after his death. Well, my Easter duty has been fulfilled. I have done what is commanded and — as supposed — under the prescribed conditions as to place, etc.

The precept not the maximum *desired*.

This law of Easter Communion must not, however, be understood as expressing the height of the Church's desires with regard to frequency in communicating. It is, on the contrary—as a

modern writer aptly puts it—"the maximum of her *toleration*," not of her desires; in other words, the least she will put up with in her children. The Council of Trent, while insisting on the annual Communion, makes a most moving appeal to the faithful, beseeching them to receive the Holy Eucharist frequently, and elsewhere signifies its wish that Catholics should approach the Holy Table *as often as they assist at Mass*.[1]

This would naturally lead us to discuss the subject of Frequent and Daily Communion, a practice to which our present Holy Father, Pope Pius X., has so strongly exhorted "all the faithful" in his Decree of December 20, 1905. But the limits of the present work will not allow a full treatment of the subject, for which the reader must consult special publications.[2]

Pith of the Decree.

Subject to the fuller information obtainable from such sources, we may sum up the pith of the Sovereign Pontiff's teaching in the words of Père Jules Besson, Professor at the Catholic Institute, Toulouse, and editor of a well-known French theological review. "Whenever a person — in spite of tepidity, *venial* sins (even numerous and fully deliberate ones), in spite of affection for such faults—finds himself, nevertheless, at the time for Communion in the state of grace[3] and animated by a supernatural intention,[4] he will always do better by receiving daily (and will act more in harmony with the purpose of the Eucharist) than he would do by communicating at longer intervals."

Mistakes occasionally made in perfect good faith suggest the utility of adding here that

[1] Session xiii., chap. 8; Session xxii., chap. 6.

[2] See list of works at the end of this book.

[3] *I.e.*, free from conscious and clear mortal sin.

[4] That is to say, the person must communicate out of some spiritual motive, and not for some purely human or faulty consideration—*e.g.*, to get praised for his virtue.

Once a day the maximum.

Communion is not to be received *oftener* than once a day. In the case, however, of one who has been to Holy Communion in the morning, and then falls dangerously sick before the ensuing midnight, he is to be strongly advised to receive It a second time as "Viaticum" (*cf.* Can. 864, § 2).

Mortal sin remembered after Confession.

Some Troubles of Conscience.—It may help the beginner to know how to deal with one or two more common perplexities which may occur in connection with Confession and with approach to the Divine Banquet of the Eucharist. 1. *With regard to Confession.* Suppose that through honest forgetfulness I have omitted to mention in my Confession a clear and undoubted mortal sin. My sorrow was sincere, and I received absolution. I go to Church in the morning, and on my way I remember my omission. There are —let me again suppose—half a dozen confessors in their respective Confessionals, unengaged. Must I go to one of them and tell the forgotten sin, or may I go to the Altar with a good conscience without doing so till the time of my next Confession? *Answer:* You may certainly go to the Altar without first supplying the omission. "But is it not a horrible sacrilege to eat of that Bread unworthily?" Undoubtedly! But you will be doing no such thing. As before stated, the honestly forgotten sin was forgiven along with those confessed, because you sincerely repented of all. Still the omission must be rectified when next you go to Confession in the ordinary course. For though your Confession, in spite of the omission, placed you in the state of grace required for Communion, yet the precept of Christ requiring every remembered mortal sin to be confessed remains in force.

Food in the night.

2. *Before Holy Communion* we are bound, unless dangerously ill, to have been fasting since midnight from all food, and drink—medicine

included.[1] Well, it is my custom to have a glass of milk by my bedside, and after retiring to rest at 10 p.m., on the eve of a Communion day, I wake up again after awhile, and, without thinking of my Communion, drink the milk and go to sleep again. In the morning I notice the empty tumbler, and remembering the Communion, am much troubled to know whether I drank its contents before or after midnight! I have no means whatever of judging. I might have been asleep only a few minutes, or it might have been hours. How is a person to decide in such a case? Clearly the *case* cannot be ascertained, namely, as to what time it was when he drank the milk. But he *can* settle the question of *right*—as to whether in the circumstances he is bound to miss his Communion. He is *not* bound to miss it. In order to be bound to do so, he must first prove, not that he is *free* to communicate, but that he has *forfeited* that freedom—which he certainly had on first going to sleep—by actually taking food after midnight. Now it is wholly uncertain that he has done this: hence he may lawfully take the benefit of the doubt and go to Communion in peace. But is it not sinful to receive in doubt? It is sinful to receive in real doubt as to the *lawfulness of receiving*. But, in the circumstances this lawfulness is not at all doubtful, albeit the fact as to the time of drinking is, and is likely to remain so till the crack of doom.

Temptations before Communion.

3. *Sinful Thoughts and Suggestions before Communion.*—This is a trouble which some may have to bear. As to its treatment, it matters little whether these worries are the outcome of previous sinfulness repented of, or of venial negligences

[1] Pius X. has granted to chronic invalids also—under certain conditions—a dispensation in virtue of which *liquid* nourishment may be taken after midnight occasionally before Communion. See *Notes on Daily Communion*, p. 63 (Burns Oates and Washbourne).

in our present life. I say "venial"—because if they were *mortal*, Confession would be necessary before approaching the Altar. Again, they may simply be tricks of the Devil—manifestations of the hate he bears to that Holy Table which God "has prepared against them that afflict us."[1] Satan will naturally try to baulk us of our Heavenly Food by playing upon our holy dread of receiving Our Lord unworthily. He is by no means above working his evil ends by means of such pious suggestions.

How to meet them.

Whatever be the origin of the trouble, the treatment is the same. Unless I am *clear* that I *fully* consented to a *mortally* sinful suggestion, my course is: first, to make an act of sorrow for possible weakness on my part, and, secondly, *to go to Communion without fear*. But what if, contrary to my sincere judgment, there *was* mortal sin in it? Granting for the moment that there was, even so you will make a worthy, and therefore fruitful Communion. It is a sound rule of conduct—apart from other theological considerations applicable to this case—that as long as I act according to what seems to me *reasonable*, I may indeed commit an error of judgment, but I shall never offend Our Lord. To do this, we must *know* it and *mean* it.

A consoling example.

In one of his many helpful works on Daily Communion[2] Père Jules Lintelo, S.J., cites, in the present connection, an instructive example from lowly life, Marie Eustelle, a French peasant girl, dead not long since, at the age of twenty-eight, in repute of holiness. But Marie—for our encouragement be it said—had once been anything but a Saint. Up to the age of fifteen she had

[1] Ps. xxii. 5. See also *Imitation of Christ*, book ii., chap. x., 1.

[2] *Children of Mary and Daily Communion*, p. 50 (P.. Kenedy and Sons, New York).

plunged wildly into such pleasures of the world as lay within her reach, giving herself up entirely to frivolous amusement, to love of dress, and to dancing, of which she was extravagantly fond—thus exposing herself to considerable dangers. During a mission, which remorse for her giddy life caused her to attend, grace touched her heart, and she resolved to mend her ways. And yet she did not even then entirely break with her old dissipations. What completed the work of conversion was *the sight of those who went frequently to Holy Communion*. Which lit up in her heart an irresistible desire to draw closer to Our Lord in His Sacrament of Love. To be brief, though Marie became devoted to Daily Communion, she still experienced very violent temptations, and yet never missed a Communion through her own fault or choice. When troubled in mind, she would say to Our Lord on approaching the Holy Table: "Oh Lord, I know not whether I have been guilty, but I believe that with Thy grace I fought and resisted. So I come to receive Thee with confidence *that I may gather strength to resist again, and do so with greater courage. My God! Thou knowest that I do not mean to offend Thee.*"

At the time of Communion.

Approaching the Communion Rails.—While a reverent demeanour evidently befits this sacred moment, and would seem to include downcast eyes, composed hands (not necessarily in rubrical fashion), and absence of hurry or bustle, yet any *exaggerated* exhibition of piety is best avoided. If Communion is to be received *during* the Mass, which—except there be some reason to the contrary—is no doubt the *better* practice—the time for leaving one's place for the Altar is when the bell rings three times at the *Domine, non sum dignus*. Or, if the church be large, and the communicant's seat far down the church, it may

be necessary to rise sooner—say, when the priest begins the *Agnus Dei*, etc. Make a point of taking your place at the rails as far to your *right* as possible. When there are many communicants waiting for their turn to receive, do not remain praying at the Altar after you have yourself received, but rise at once to make room for others, and return reverently to your place. There is no need to genuflect towards the altar before leaving it, since you are yourself for the time being the happy altar and tabernacle of the Blessed Sacrament.

Right Way of Receiving.—Sometimes a large square card, covered with linen, is used in place of large and long Communion cloths spread upon the rails. In either case, hold the article flat and closely under your chin. Its purpose is to prevent the Sacred Host from falling to the ground by one of those accidents which may occur to the most careful of priests, and at which it would be foolish to be shocked. Our Lord's foreknowledge of man's clumsiness forms a part of this mystery of Divine Condescension. He is incapable of physical injury, and—when an accident cannot be forestalled by ordinary human foresight—He suffers no moral injury either. No irreverence is done since none is intended.

But such accidents being often due to the awkwardness of the *communicant*, it is well for the latter to notice what to avoid. For it is mainly a question of what *not* to do.

1. *Do not get into a fuss.* It is quite simple and easy!

2. Do not make the mistake of holding down your head, so that the way to your mouth ceases to be obvious. Victims to the fashion of wearing enormous hats need to notice this point especially. When the priest approaches you, *raise the head well up.*

3. *Open your mouth well*, yet without exaggeration, and put the tongue well forward so as *fully* to cover the lower lip. The latter should not touch the Host.

4. As the head is to be uplifted, and yet you do not want to be staring into the priest's face, the obvious remedy is to shut your eyes on raising your head.

5. Do not move about—still less jerk your head forward just as the priest is about to administer Communion to you. Catholics "receive" Communion : they do not "take it." Such movement is likely to knock the Blessed Sacrament out of the priest's hand or to break It. Keep still, and leave the priest to do his work.

6. Though the Sacred Host is not to be dissolved in the mouth, yet it is as well to let It rest quietly on the tongue, after closing the mouth, for a second or two, when It will be easily swallowed. Nervous haste to swallow instantly will probably result in the Host cleaving to the palate, whence It is with difficulty dislodged.

7. Under no (ordinary) conceivable circumstances may you touch the Blessed Sacrament, either directly, or by means of the Communion cloth : nor may you bite it with your teeth.

P.S.—Gloves should *not* be worn at Communion. As to dress, ordinary tidiness and neatness are to be commended. But what Our Lord cares most about is not *la mode*, but the fashion of the *heart*. All the same, it is most unbecoming that people should present themselves at Our Lord's Divine Banquet with their toilette so imperfectly made that it needs overhauling to be fit even for the *family* breakfast table on returning home from Mass. It is to be feared that some sort of comprehensive overall is used at times, like charity, to cover a multitude of sins.

Preparation and Thanksgiving.

Twofold preparation for Communion.

Preparation for receiving Holy Communion is twofold: that of *the body* and that of *the soul*. The natural (or complete) fast from midnight, and decency of apparel, are the points concerning the body.[1]

Of soul.

Preparation of *soul*—the most important part—is *remote*, or *immediate*. The remote consists of taking the necessary means for being in the State of Grace (*i.e.*, free from known mortal sin) and disposing our minds in a general way for the great act we are about to perform. This may be suitably done by thinking of our coming Communion overnight when retiring to rest, and again upon waking in the morning, striving as far as our circumstances and duties permit to banish all earthly thoughts. The use of some brief aspirations, or ejaculatory prayers will help, many of which may be found in Prayer-Books: or we may speak to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament after our own fashion, expressing, *e.g.*, our firm belief in His Real Presence in the Eucharist, our hope in Him, our love, our sorrow for sin, our unworthiness to receive Him, and yet our great need of Him and desire to welcome Him as the saving Food and Medicine of our souls. We may add invocation of Our Blessed Lady or of our favourite Saints, or Guardian Angel, begging their intercession that we may make a highly fruitful Communion. We can continue this kind of preparation while passing from our home to the church, instead of allowing ourselves to be distracted by what is passing in the street. Whatever time we may have left on reaching the church will serve for

[1] For explanation of the Eucharistic fast, see *Letters on Christian Doctrine*, vol. ii., p. 142.

more sustained and recollected *immediate* preparation. This may consist of following the Mass in a Missal (and nothing could well be better) with the addition, perhaps, of some short aspirations to the coming Divine Guest as the moment for going to the Altar rails approaches. N.B.—The above are *suggestions* only. They are most *desirable* forms of preparation. But the only absolutely essential preparation of soul, the neglect of which involves an unworthy reception, is *that we be in the State of Grace.* In one sense, no creature—not even Mary Immaculate herself—can be strictly worthy to receive God. But Christ *commands* us to eat of His Flesh and drink of His Blood : and as grace makes us the temples of the Holy Trinity, it also fits us for becoming living tabernacles of the Son of God made man.

Teaching of Pius X.

With regard to the *amount* of our devotions before and after Communion, we have the express teaching of the Papal Decree : " But whereas the Sacraments of the New Law, though they take effect *ex opere operato*,[1] nevertheless produce a greater effect in proportion as the dispositions of the recipient are better, therefore care is to be taken that Holy Communion be preceded by serious preparation, and followed by suitable thanksgiving, *according to each one's strength, circumstances, and duties.*" From the words which I have here italicized, it is evident that the amount of devotion cannot be fixed alike for everyone. The preparation urged upon us is described as " serious." But seriousness has to do rather with the spirit and quality of the preparation than with its quantity. Hence Communion should not be missed merely because our duties, work, health, or some unexpected cause, prevents our giving as much time and attention to preparation and thanksgiving as we would wish. The

[1] See pp. 119-122.

very widespread practice of devoting about a quarter of an hour to each of these forms of piety serves as a fair standard of the *desirable* minimum.

Want of time.

When there is a notable shortage in these devotional acts, it is a good thing to make up for it, *e.g.*, by a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament during the day; but there is no obligation to do this. There is no law, moreover, obliging preparation or thanksgiving to be made wholly in church, or, indeed, in church at all. Still, in view of public edification, it would be better to make a part of each in public, unless some need prevent this. Where any reasonable cause exists for not remaining so long in church, a communicant need not heed the scandal of "the weak" which some may choose to take. Indeed, such scandal closely resembles that still less reputable form called "Pharisaic" scandal, since it obviously springs from a rash judgment, made in ignorance of facts, to the effect that the communicant in question has made no other devotions than those he or she has been seen to make in church.

P.S. On Good Friday, Communion is given only to the dangerously sick, as Viaticum. On Holy Saturday the local practice should be followed.

For the age at which children are bound to make their Easter Communion, see Appendix I.

CHAPTER XII

ABSTINENCE AND FASTING: SUPPORTING PASTORS

We come now to another of the duties binding all members of the Church under grievous sin—except they be exempt by circumstances, or dispensed by ecclesiastical authority.

Need of Penance.

The Church, mindful of her Founder's warning: "Except ye do penance ye shall all likewise perish," bids her children satisfy for their sins by means of mortifying the flesh.

Two kinds.

The first and milder of these forms of penance is Abstinence from flesh meat on certain fixed days. Here, the restriction is put upon the *quality*, not upon the quantity, or frequency, of food. On days purely of Abstinence, it is flesh meat alone that is forbidden under pain of sin, including—unless legitimate local custom in some countries admit of certain exceptions—poultry *of every kind*.

Nature of fasting.

Fasting is a severer penitential observance. It puts a check *both* on the quality and of the quantity of food. Only one *full* meal is allowed in the twenty-four hours, and this may not be taken before noon. A few mouthfuls (about two ounces) of dry bread or toast, together with tea, chocolate, or coffee, is allowed in place of breakfast. Milk—unless in very small quantity, just to make the beverage palatable—is forbidden. A half-meal at another time, called "collation," is also permitted. Collation may be taken at

midday if it be desired to make the *full* meal in the evening. Moreover, if a person cannot stand fasting except by starting the day with collation, it is better that he should do this than abandon the fast. For this plan just saves the essence of fasting—as now practised in the Church—which is that there be but one *full* meal in the day, and that not taken before midday.

Fish and Meat together.

It is not part of our present task to go into all the dietary details of fasting.[1] On days appointed for *Fasting*, those who are *dispensed* from *abstinence* are not now forbidden to eat *both* fish and meat at one and the same meal.

The convert from Anglicanism, who may formerly have practised Fasting and Abstinence by pious choice, and somewhat after his own (or his clergyman's) notions, needs to remember that now he is under laws, made by God's Church, any substantial breach of which, if deliberate, involves mortal sin.[2]

Table of Days of Abstinence and Fasting for England and Wales.

Abstinence Days.—The general rule is that the law of Abstinence is to be kept on all Fridays.

Days of both Fasting and Abstinence.—The law of Abstinence and Fasting together is to be

[1] Fuller information may be found in *Letters on Christian Doctrine*, vol. i., p. 336. See also *Catholic Customs* (Catholic Truth Society), which gives a very useful table of fasting diet. In each diocese the "Lenten Indult"—published each Lent by the Bishop—must be consulted for complete information.

[2] See Luke x. 16; Matt. xviii. 18.

observed on Ash Wednesday, the Fridays and Saturdays of Lent, the Ember Days, the Vigils of Pentecost, the Assumption of Our Lady (Aug. 14), the Feast of All Saints (Oct. 31), and Christmas Day. Hence the Vigil of SS. Peter and Paul is not a day of Fasting nor of Abstinence except it fall on a Friday.

Days of Fasting but not of Abstinence.—All the other days of Lent.

Exceptions.—On Sundays or Holy days of Obligation the law regarding Abstinence or Fasting or both does not bind, with the exception, however, of Holy days in Lent.

Vigils are not anticipated so far as the law of Fasting and Abstinence is concerned.

The law of Fasting and Abstinence ceases for Holy Saturday after midday (Can. 1,252).

Particular Indults.—No change is made by the Canons in the case of particular indults, nor in vows, whether personal or corporate, nor in the constitutions and rules of any religious society or approved institute, whether of men or of women living in common, even not under vow (Can. 1,253).

For England, Ireland, and Scotland.—The Catholic Directory for 1921 for England states that one other day besides Friday each week in Lent is a day of Abstinence—viz., Wednesday.

December 26, if Friday, is not a day of Abstinence in England.

A relaxation of the general law of Abstinence has been granted to each of the three countries for Ember Saturdays and for such Vigils as immediately precede or follow a Friday or other day of Abstinence.

In Ireland the Wednesdays in Lent are days of Abstinence instead of the Saturdays prescribed by the Code, in virtue of quinquennial faculties granted to the Irish Bishops, January, 1918.

For the United States.—In the United States the Bishops have power to appoint the Wednesdays in Lent as days of Abstinence in place of the Saturdays prescribed by the Code.

As, however, particular indults vary in different countries, it is necessary for the faithful to make themselves acquainted with local laws.

When unable to fast, or abstain.

Dispensation.—When a person feels unable to fast, or to abstain, he should refer the matter to the priest. Apart from ill-health, there are forms of occupation or work which of their own nature *exempt* persons from Fasting. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that the *mere fact* of making a journey constitutes a cause for exemption. There may, however, be accessory reasons of fairly common occurrence which, added to the journey, may release from the obligation, such as special fatigues in prospect, difficulty of obtaining suitable diet, etc. Consultation with one's priest is always a prudent safeguard against excessive leniency towards self in these days when health—and even beauty of complexion—is so greatly worshipped, and the Gospel of Christ Crucified so much forgotten.

Difficulties of Converts.—Converts who live in independence and have the arrangement of their own meals, will have no difficulty in providing themselves with penitential fare for days of Fasting or Abstinence. Not so, perhaps, the "only convert in the family," or "companions," governesses, servants, employés. The household in question may be greatly opposed to the change of faith; and those responsible for the table may decline to provide meals such as will enable the convert to comply with the laws of the Church, except at the sacrifice of proper nourishment.

A reasonable Church.

On the one side, Mother Church does not require her children to endure really serious hardship for the sake of her penitential obser-

vances. These are, of course, intended to create a certain amount of discomfort, for the chastening of the soul by means of mortifying the flesh. But sickness or notable injury is *not* intended—especially such as comes from circumstances not contemplated by the nature of the law itself, or in the case of those whose serious duties make heavy demands upon their physical powers in the shape of work which must be done, and done, too, so as to satisfy employers. The Church has every consideration for those who have to work hard for a living.

Fidelity to Faith.

But there is another side to the question. When the *evident* motive for not supplying the convert with suitable fare is not the trouble or expense of providing extra dishes, but bigotry and hostility to the Faith, one has to beware of so acting as to seem to be compromising Catholic principles through weakness or shame. That would be a sinful denial of Jesus Christ. "He who is not with Me, is against Me," He said.[1]

How to act.

How, then, is the convert to act in such a difficulty? 1. Consult your confessor, any priest at hand, carefully explaining all the circumstances of the case. But if this cannot be done at once, in the meantime (2) let those who arrange the meals know that you are not allowed as a Catholic to eat meat on such and such a day, and that you wish to fulfil your conscientious duty. If this has no effect, then, (3) if you can make a sufficiently good meal off things that the Church allows you, do so. But if not, then, (4) you may take what forbidden food is necessary for your wants, *provided* you show in some way that you not only do so unwillingly, but that your newly adopted faith does not oblige you to starve yourself. This will remove all appearance of acting against your religion under compulsion. It is not as if you had the ordering of meals.

[1] Matt. xii. 30.

You are (as here supposed) dependent on the catering of others over whom you have no control.

Caution against laxity.

These directions may, of course, be interpreted by easy-going consciences too indulgently. Merely to save the unpleasantness of seeming singular or troublesome, or to avoid a laugh or sneer, people may dispense themselves from the faintest attempt at procuring penitential diet, reasoning laxly : " It's not customary in this place to eat fish on Fridays or to fast. You see, they are all Protestants, and would not understand it." (By the way, do not be so sure of that, my friend, in these days.) " I should only be making a nuisance of myself." (Query : Are such folk always so commendably anxious not to be nuisances when their own whims and fancies are concerned ?) Thus some act upon the home-made axiom that " when staying with Protestants one does not eat fish on Fridays." This proceeding is very often mere weakness and human respect in disguise. It is not really inconvenience to others that is feared, but unpleasantness to dear No. 1. We must not be ashamed of our Catholic profession—indeed, there is nothing to be ashamed of in our glorious Faith !

Employés and servants.

A servant, or employé, however, who is not in a position to prepare proper food, or procure its being prepared, without causing an amount of disturbance that might endanger his or her position, is not bound to run the risk of losing a situation which it might be difficult to replace, and a serious loss not to replace quickly. But all semblance of disloyalty to the Church must be avoided. Fidelity to other Catholic duties is particularly necessary in such a case as a visible proof of constancy.

An objection.

It might be objected to the above that even with the precautions named, eating meat on Fridays in such circumstances of bigotry would

always be a betrayal of Catholic principle. Did not the early martyrs—it might be urged—hold it necessary to sacrifice—not a proper meal—but their very lives rather than eat of food offered to pagan deities?

The disparity of the cases

The two cases do not run on all fours. The partaking of food offered to the gods of Greece or Rome was in itself an act of rank idolatry and superstition, and was commanded to the Christian martyr under threat of torments precisely as such. All the surrounding circumstances would have given to such positive compliance the character of an act of pagan worship, and not of necessary bodily nourishment: it was recognized on all hands as a symbol of apostacy from Christ. Now —to come to our convert—the mere *eating of meat* is not in itself an act of worship at all, whether false or true. Not of false, at all events, since the same act is lawful on most days. Nor does it become an act of false worship *on account of the Church's forbiddance* on Fridays, since no Catholic is held to have denied his Faith by sinfully disregarding Friday Abstinence. The only circumstance, therefore, which could make the convert's act (for the sake of necessary nourishment) an act of apostacy, would be the hostility to his Faith inspiring those who created the necessity for his eating meat. But if the convert lets it be understood that, though driven to violate one of its observances, he, nevertheless, holds fast to his Faith, all ground is removed for interpreting his act as a denial of it.[1] What if he had previously sought and obtained a dispensation from abstinence? No one would blame

[1] It is here meant, of course, that the act is not even one of *external* conformity to heresy, which would always be sinful, in spite of *interior* adherence to the Faith. Thus, a Catholic may not outwardly take an active part in non-Catholic worship to escape disagreeable consequences, however true to his religion he may remain in his heart of hearts.

him then for using it, whatever might be the dispositions of those at table with him. Yet both the act of eating meat on Friday and the circumstance of bigotry would remain precisely the same as if the convert had settled the point for himself. The most one would ask of him would be that he should let it be known that he had obtained leave, so as to counteract any sense of triumph over him that the bigots might be disposed to entertain. As a substitute for this, he is here advised to intimate that the Church does not oblige him to starvation.

Support of Spiritual Pastors.

A Divine precept.

This is no mere optional practice of charity, but a duty binding every individual Catholic —one expressly revealed in the Scriptures as a Divine command. The Catholic Church has practically abandoned the usage of exacting tithes from her subjects ; but this only enhances the necessity of Catholics doing of their own accord what might be justly demanded of them at a fixed rate. The mere fact that the laws of now Protestant England or of other non-Catholic States would not recognize any such claim on the Church's part upon her children cannot alter the moral obligation to provide for the temporal wants of those who freely forego the ordinary means of livelihood in order to devote their time and strength to the spiritual needs of their flocks. The fact that (in the Western portion of the Catholic Church) the clergy are celibates, while—from one side—it might appear to diminish the needs of priests as compared to married or marriageable clergymen of the English Church or Dissenting bodies, should rather be regarded as heightening the claims of the former upon the support of the faithful. If celibacy generally frees the Catholic priest from family ties and

burdens, it also deprives him of domestic care for his wants: and, moreover, secures for his flock spiritual attention of a more undivided and fearless kind. It is in time of serious sickness and death that a priest's ministrations assume such vital importance, and the celibate priest is freer to betake himself at any hour of the day or night to a dying parishioner, and is not open to the temptation which may temper the zeal of married clergy—that of taking too much into consideration the risk of infection to wife or children arising from attendance on certain cases.

Limits of duty.

Obviously a Catholic is only bound to contribute towards the support of pastors *according to his means*. The priests of the district in which he lives are the ones who have the first and strict claim to his help. Their just claim should be satisfied in the first place. This, however, does not mean that everything a Catholic can afford to give to the Church must be given to them. Catholics are free to bestow their liberality where they please, as the universal practice of the Church shows. But if a person has very little to give, that little should be bestowed on the priests in charge of his soul in preference to all others. It is they who will be bound at all hazards to attend him in dangerous sickness.

Not a paid clergy.

The convert should remember that, unlike the clergy of the Anglican Church, and ministers of many Dissenting bodies, Catholic priests, in non-Catholic countries at least, have no fixed pastoral salaries. Unless they chance to have adequate private means of their own — which is the exception rather than the rule—they depend for the necessaries of life upon the voluntary offerings of their people.[1] They are not supported by the State.

[1] This condition of neediness also accounts for charges often made for seats at Catholic services, to those who are not bench-holders. The convert from a State-supported

"The Great Spoliation."

To speak of England—the Reformation, through the medium of tyrannical sovereigns or apostate and obsequious Tudor Parliaments, despoiled the Catholic Church in England of all its time-honoured possessions, for the most part the fruit of the zeal and generosity of the Catholic people in former ages. These were usurped, or as the French Jacobins to-day in power would sweetly put it, "attribués," for promoting a novel religion which the Catholic donors would have rejected as a schism and a heresy. Rather than consent to error, many of them, inspired by the heroic examples of Blessed Thomas More and Blessed John, Cardinal Fisher, and other martyrs for the Faith of Rome, preferred beggaring fines, imprisonment, and a cruel death. (Precisely the same spoliation is now being practised in France upon the Church by atheistic and Lodge-ridden ministries.)

The apostolate of support.

The Catholic clergy, therefore, has ever since been mainly dependent upon the voluntary contributions of the faithful laity, and those who generously acquit themselves of this duty—if not always blessed temporally in consequence—have both the merit and consolation of knowing that they are doing a truly apostolic work and helping to extend the empire of Jesus Christ. They are securing to many souls besides their own the priceless benefits of Holy Mass and Sacraments, for life and in death, and, by providing the young with constant religious training, are indirectly contributing to the sanctification of many a future Catholic home.

Church is at first apt to be staggered by a practice which seems to put a tax upon his duty of Divine worship. This is not really the case. For no one is charged for *mere* admission—at all events, when worship is obligatory. At most, the payment is for securing a seat, or a *better* one. Then there are usually a fair number of *free* seats. If people do not like to be seen in these, then they are paying for their own self-respect, and not for worshipping God.

CHAPTER XIII

NOTES ON VARIOUS SACRAMENTS

We have now finished our review of the general duties of Catholics, including reference to those Sacraments of daily life—Confession and Holy Communion. Let us now turn to some other Sacraments.

Its importance.

Confirmation.—This Sacrament deserves first mention on account of its importance for strengthening in grace the newly received member of the Church. Once confirmed, the convert may be regarded as "fully fledged."

The opportunity must be taken, in accordance with the new canons (Can. 787), of receiving Confirmation, for the canon states that no one is permitted to neglect to receive it. For its purpose is to strengthen us in the Faith and against the assaults of the Devil, the world and the flesh. Its object is to make us not merely members of Christ as Baptism does, but His brave soldiers, who can stand a few hard knocks in His service without flinching or cowardly surrender.

The convert's special need.

Now, it is hardly necessary to point out how much converts stand in need of such sacramental graces. There are not so many of them who find the practice of their newly received Faith a perfectly peaceful progress. The powers of evil will be likely to seek revenge for the salutary step they have taken, the flesh will pull at their heart-strings and represent the pain, and perhaps

temporal loss, which their change is inflicting upon those dear to them—not to mention the possible renewal of its lower suggestions—and the world will look askance at them, if it does not actually harry them in a thousand petty ways. For bearing up against such odds, the grace of the Holy Ghost, the "Comforter," is badly needed.

Need not be delayed.

Converts need not wait till the Bishop of their diocese come to confirm at the church of the district in which they live. Any priest will gladly arrange for them to be confirmed in some other church within reasonable distance, where a Confirmation is about to be held.

The trial of publicity.

To grown-up men and women, the publicity of a Confirmation, and the sense of being associated in it with a number of children—as commonly happens—may prove somewhat of a trial. But they should bravely face it, if only as a thank-offering to God for the immense blessing of membership with His True Church, to whom He has granted the real power of conferring the gift of His Holy Spirit for raising their souls to the high dignity of His own special temples and resting-place. They must rid themselves of the more ordinary Anglican notion of Confirmation, which is mainly that of a mere public profession of church-membership, and a *personal* renewal of baptismal promises, formerly made by proxy. Looked at in this non-Catholic light, Confirmation is a thing for boys and girls in their teens. With us, it is one of Christ's Sacraments, with its own intrinsic efficacy, in which we receive a definite gift from God—that of His Holy Spirit—through the ministry of the Bishop. And such a gift is invaluable *at any time of life.* The longer we have been deprived of it, the more eager ought we to be to secure it as soon as possible, even at some little cost to our shyness, or even to our human respect and natural vanity.

Baptism.

I shall not treat of this Sacrament as *received* by the convert, but as one which he or she may be called upon to *administer* to another, in some case of necessity *where a priest is not available.* If he were, lay-baptism, though as *valid* as his own, would be unlawfully given. Lay-baptism.

This, if it happens at all, is likely to occur in one of two ways. It may be the case of some non-Catholic relative, friend, or patient, at the point of death, who wishes, or may reasonably presume to wish, to die a member of the Catholic Church, and in whose case there is no satisfactory evidence at hand as to their having had Baptism, *validly* administered, or perhaps administered *at all* to them in the past. The other case would be that of some little child in danger of death that has not been baptized in the Catholic Church, and there is question of placing its salvation in safety. Likely cases.

As every instructed Catholic is aware, Baptism is the only means by which children not endowed with reason can get to Heaven. This, as the reader knows, is not saying that the departed souls of unbaptized infants suffer the punishment of Hell. Necessity of Baptism.

For the above reason, every Catholic, and—in view of their closer intercourse with little children—especially Catholic women, should know how to administer Baptism properly in an urgent case when there is risk in waiting till a priest can be procured.

Method of Baptizing.—Take ordinary water in a vessel or sponge (sea-water, or rain-water will do) and pour it on the flesh (not the hair) of the child's *head* (preferably on the forehead) so that however small its quantity it may *flow*, and *while pouring*, pronounce distinctly the words: "I How to baptize

baptize thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." *Amen* may be added, but it is not essential.[1] Holy Water is not necessary. By saying that the words must be said "while pouring" the water, I mean that the words must accompany the pouring at *some part* of the same. It is not necessary for validity that the pouring should be continued during *the whole sentence* of the words. Mere *sprinkling* with water is to be *avoided* as seriously endangering the validity of the Baptism.

Matrimony.

What makes a real engagement.

Engagement or Betrothal.—According to the New Codex of Canon Law, no engagement, or mutually accepted promise of marriage, holds good either in Church Law or in conscience, unless drawn up in writing and signed both by the contracting parties, and by the parish priest, or Ordinary, or by two witnesses. Hence, without such formal written and signed agreement, no *conscientious* obstacle prevents a change of "intended." It should be noticed that in the case of an engagement to marry, *either* a parish priest, *or* two witnesses will serve. For the wedding itself, on the contrary, both the parish priest *and* two witnesses are required.

Marriage.—Matrimony among baptized Christians being, according to the Catholic Faith, a Sacrament of Christ, and no mere natural human contract, it belongs to the Church, and by no

[1] When there is reason for thinking that the dying person or child has formerly gone through some form of baptismal rite, the words given above should be pronounced *conditionally*—that is to say, the person baptizing should either mean, or actually say, "If thou art not baptized," and then pronounce distinctly the form given above—namely, "I baptize thee, in the name, etc. . . .," pouring the water as already explained. Baptism can be *received validly* once only.

means to the State, to control its celebration. It is one of those "mysteries of God," mentioned by Saint Paul, and therefore belonging to the competence of those appointed by Christ to be the "dispensers" of the said "mysteries."[1]

Marriage laws bind the conscience.

The Catholic Church, knowing the vital importance of Matrimony as the foundation-stone of the family, and hence of human society, has enacted various laws regulating the *valid* and *lawful* reception of this Sacrament; and these laws, be it observed, bind the *consciences* of her subjects under pain of nullity, or of sin (as the case may be), let the civil authority say what it will. Christian Matrimony belongs to the "things that are God's," and not to the "things that are Cæsar's."

Without exceeding the limits assigned to the present work, a few points of graver moment may here be noticed.

What makes a valid Catholic marriage.

Conditions for a "Valid" Marriage.—By a "*valid*" marriage is meant one that holds good *in the sight of God* and *in conscience*, not one merely recognized by the law of the State. A union contracted by a *Catholic* (even a *lapsed* one) under conditions declared by the Church to be invalid is, in truth, *no marriage at all*, in spite of a public wedding ceremony: and cohabitation in such a case would be as grievously sinful as if no such ceremony had ever been performed.

Forbidden degrees of kindred.

There are certain degrees of blood-relationship within which marriage is *null* and *void* unless the Church grant a dispensation. And here the convert should note that the list of forbidden degrees of kindred contained in the Book of Common Prayer is by one half less extensive than that of the Catholic Church. Thus, marriage between First Cousins or even Second Cousins is null in the Catholic Church, except a dispensation for

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 1.

it be sought and obtained. Other differences are found, concerning degrees of *affinity*—*e.g.*, in the case of marriage with Deceased Wife's Sister (or deceased husband's brother). Though this kind of union is invalid for a Catholic—*without a dispensation*—the Church, while forbidding the union by her own law, denies that it is opposed to the *Divine* Law (as Anglicans are wont to hold),[1] and therefore she claims power to dispense in such a case, for sufficiently serious reasons.

Present legislation.

A Catholic to be validly married, must be married before the proper parish priest and two witnesses,[2] nor does it matter, as regards

[1] See the cases of Banister *v.* Thomson, and, on appeal, of Rex *v.* Dibdin. By holding to this erroneous view about degrees of affinity, the Church of England has recently come into collision with the State Parliament that dominates her. For, in 1907, Parliament repealed the legislation under Henry VIII. on the subject—passed in order to whitewash that profligate monarch's lust for Anne Boleyn. In future, it will be penal for any Anglican clergyman to refuse Holy Communion—as to "notorious evil livers"—to such as take advantage of the Act of 1907, for marrying a Deceased Wife's Sister. As a way out of this deadlock, the Anglican Dean of Manchester, writing to the *Times* for Jan. 1, 1910, naïvely suggests a return on the part of the English Church to "Catholic" Canon Law, which, while forbidding such unions in general, leaves the door open for dispensation in cases of particular hardship. Of course, in making this suggestion, Dr. Welldon has to abandon the Anglican theory of a *Divine* prohibition against these marriages, stoutly upheld by Bishops of his Church. For no Pope even has ever claimed to dispense from the revealed law of God! Granting that the Dean's plan were adopted, it is still very doubtful whether the average Anglican layman, contemplating a marriage of the kind, would accept the innovation of a dispensing Anglican episcopate and trouble to seek a dispensation from a "Right Reverend Father in God." He would, far more likely, be quite content with the State sanction of the union. And if he were so, the difficulty created by the Act of 1907, though evaded by Dr. Welldon's plan, would recur in all its horrid force when an *un-dispensed* couple presented themselves for Holy Communion.

[2] When these are wanting, the marriage is called "clandestine." Such a marriage was always *sinful*, but it *used* to be *valid* in England, until Pius X. extended to England,

invalidity, whether the ceremony be performed before a non-Catholic minister, or before a Registrar, or both. The last-named official must, by English law, attend a Catholic marriage: but without the priest and witnesses, the parties will not be made man and wife before God and the conscience. This applies to every marriage of a Catholic, whether the other party to the union be a Catholic or not. Thus, for example, no "Mixed" Marriage (*i.e.*, between a Catholic and a reputedly baptized non-Catholic) holds good before God and the conscience, unless presided over by the proper parish priest and attended by two witnesses. For exceptions, see p. 344*g*.

Catholic conditions.

As the Church, for grave and obvious reasons, strongly objects to "Mixed" Marriages, these are unlawful for a Catholic except the Church—for counterbalancing grave reasons—grant leave, or "dispensation."[1] This dispensation is granted by the Bishop on certain express conditions: (1) That *both* parties sincerely promise to bring up *all* the children of their union (whether boys or girls) in the Catholic Faith. (2) That the non-Catholic promise not to hinder the Catholic half in the full exercise of the Catholic religion. (3) That the Catholic half seek by discreet means to lead the non-Catholic into the Church.

It is, moreover, customary to require both parties to sign these promises in writing, which, although not binding in English law, are certainly binding upon the Catholic in *conscience*, and, at least in *honour*, upon the non-Catholic.

If these promises be not obtainable, it follows that there can be *no true wedlock*. For no priest

in 1908, the ordinary law of the Church. Hence, Catholic books on marriage, printed before 1908, are unreliable on the present point. The law is embodied in the New Codex.

[1] The Jewish Rabbis are equally opposed to "Mixed" Marriages of their people with "Gentiles"—*i.e.*, Christians—and for similar reasons. See the *Times*, Jan. 2, 1910.

Promises essential for lawful wedlock.

will celebrate the marriage without episcopal sanction, and no bishop grants the dispensation except on the express condition that the promises will be given.

Necessity for caution.

A Catholic contemplating a "Mixed" Marriage will easily gather from this how necessary it is to make sure *in good time* that the non-Catholic "intended" is ready to promise. Else, at the last moment a Catholic girl, for instance, may find herself in the perilous alternative of either committing herself, in the eyes of Catholic neighbours, to a life of domestic sin and degradation, from which escape will be very difficult, or of having to break off what may be a very ardent attachment, in order to provide for her eternal salvation. Not a few well-instructed Catholic girls, alas, have gone under in such a predicament!

Pie-crust promises.

Unfortunately, it is not so rare for these promises to be glibly made *before* marriage, and to be shamefully broken *after* it. And this by no means fanciful contingency constitutes one of the risks of these "mixed" unions.[1]

Preparation for the Sacrament of Matrimony.—Holy Matrimony is one of the Sacraments "of the living": it supposes the recipients to be already in possession of the supernatural life of sanctifying grace—that is, free from *mortal* sin. Its purpose is to increase that grace for the special needs of the married state. Consequently, an intending bride or bridegroom conscious of mortal sin should at least go to Confession before the nuptial ceremony. One would further strongly urge approach to Holy Communion as well, either on the wedding morning itself, or, if wedding preparations make this difficult, on the previous day.

In "mixed" marriages.

When the marriage is "mixed," the pair cannot have the consolation and blessing of receiving

[1] See *Letters on Christian Doctrine*, vol. iii., p. 165.

Holy Communion together. Even Confession is out of the question for the non-Catholic half. The Catholic party should therefore help the non-Catholic to make something equivalent to an Act of Contrition for past sin.

The special Blessing of the Bride, even where it is allowed to be given outside the "Mass for Bride and Bridegroom," cannot be administered in a "Mixed" Marriage. The special Mass above named is also out of the question. The press has sometimes reported one in the case of such unions, no doubt mistaking for a nuptial Mass the private attendance of the pair at Mass *previous* to the wedding, a proceeding of which the Church takes no cognizance.

Duties of Catholic Parents.

Early Baptism of infants.

These cannot be discussed here in full.[1] But let attention at least be called to the supreme importance of having children baptized *as soon as ever it is possible after birth.* No properly taught Catholic mother puts off the ceremony till she is strong enough to assist at it. The vital importance of the Sacrament must over-ride all considerations of sentiment.

Delicate babes.

If the child's health be at all precarious, the priest should *at once* be sent for, that he may remove all spiritual risks by making it a child of God and heir to Heaven; or, in a case of danger, *anyone* may baptize, and the person who knows best how to do it should at once perform the rite. Even then the priest should be notified as soon as possible.[2]

[1] See *Letters*, etc., vol. i. Fourth Commandment on this point.

[2] See *Letters*, etc., vol. ii., p. 43, "Way to Baptize." For duties of parents (or their substitutes) as regards First Communion of Children, see Appendix I.

Conversion after Marriage with a Non-Catholic: Convert Mother's Difficulties.

The position of a wife who has married a non-Catholic, and afterwards becomes a Catholic, presents many difficulties—more especially if there be young children in the family. That of a convert husband, though somewhat trying, is less so. For, as the head of the family, he has, or ought to have, the higher control of his household. He can thus insist upon his offspring being trained in that faith which he now knows to be the Christ-appointed way of salvation.

The convert mother's trial.

With the convert mother it is different—not in point of principle, of course, but in moral power to make principle prevail. However ardently she may long to have her little ones securely baptized by a priest, and—according to their ability—taught the Catholic Faith, her husband may step in and absolutely forbid it. This is indeed a severe trial for any sincere convert. But God does not demand moral impossibilities. She must watch, pray, and hope in God.

Husband's opposition.

Cruel instances are unfortunately not wanting in which a wife's conversion has been quickly followed by expulsion from the home and forced separation from her children. But such heartless bigotry apart, the case more easily occurs in which the husband exacts from his convert wife a promise that she will never speak to the children about religion, nor influence them towards Catholicism, nor take them to Catholic worship. The husband—perhaps long a stranger to any kind of worship—suddenly begins to go to church regularly, by way of securing that his children shall not attend *Catholic* worship—a truly negative form of religion.

The question arises: If the husband demand such a promise seriously, may the convert wife give it? Considered by itself, such an undertaking would be wrong. A parent, Catholic or not, is bound to lead children in the right way, according to his or her lights. For a Catholic mother, the Catholic Faith is the *only* right way. That the non-Catholic husband, if sincere, may make the same plea in behalf of *his* creed, does not alter his wife's conscientious duty;[1] for the marriage vows cannot include the surrender of her inmost conscience! But there is another point to be considered. The alternative of her refusing to promise may be that the children will be taken out of her care and submitted to non-Catholic—perchance strongly *anti*-Catholic—influences. This would be far worse from the Catholic standpoint. Of the two evil alternatives, the less evil one may lawfully be preferred. Even the silent example and companionship of a good Catholic mother counts for very much, though she *speak* never a word about religion. It would be very different if the promise entailed action *positively opposed* to the Faith, such as teaching doctrines incompatible with those of the Church. That would be intrinsically wrong and inadmissible. The good end in view would not justify the employment of such unlawful means.[2] Promise not to influence.

Let us turn to another supposition. The convert mother is left *a free hand* as to the education of her children. If these be still very young, the case is simple. The Catholic priest should be consulted betimes about their Baptism and in- Making children Catholics.

[1] See *Letters*, etc., vol. iii., p. 183, "Mixed Marriages," where the reasoning with a *prospective* non-Catholic husband may help the convert mother with her actual one.

[2] Yet in almost any book or newspaper you take up it is stated that *Jesuits* maintain that *the end justifies the means* —*i.e.*, that one may do evil that good may come of it!

struction. If they were never baptized in any form after birth they will be made children of God and co-heirs with Jesus Christ—members of His Church. They should be regularly and carefully taught their Catholic Catechism by their mother.

Caution with older children.

It is impossible to fix a hard and fast line as to the age (after the attainment of reason) at which it ceases to be right to proceed in this summary way without consulting a child's inclinations. The thing will depend a great deal upon the mental development reached. Even a child of eleven, twelve, or thirteen, accustomed to non-Catholic worship, for some years past, may conceive decided objections to being made a Catholic. However unreasonable or trivial the objections may be, one may not baptize one who has reached the full use of reason without his consent, presumed or expressed. Further, a child of the age supposed needs to be instructed in the dispositions for Baptism—faith and sorrow for sin. So here again the priest's advice must be taken, before dealing with the child.

Still greater prudence is needed with older sons or daughters fast approaching manhood and womanhood, lest violence be done to their consciences, or they become Catholics for no better reason than a sentimental wish to be " like father " (or mother).

Once children have grown up and are out of leading-strings, the convert parent, in spite of deep regrets that they should have been formed in heresy, or unbelief, will generally have to be content with praying constantly that light may come to them, trusting in God's goodness that He will change their hearts, and—a most important point—recommending the Faith to them by the silent eloquence of exemplary Catholic conduct, *at home*, and not only in the form of church-going. Example is more efficacious than

argument. In controversial disputes, temper is often lost and domestic peace and charity endangered, without the truth being at all advanced.

Talking about Religion.—When members of a family, or those we are constantly thrown with, are divided from us in point of religion, *two extremes* should be avoided. (1) Trying to force the Faith down dissentient throats, continually thrusting argument upon them, nagging at them, ridiculing, etc. No possible good can be expected from such tactics. (2) Acting rigidly on the axiom : " I never mention religion at home." Some appear to pride themselves inordinately on this observance, as though it were one of the Ten Commandments, or a precept of the Church. Perhaps the rule would sometimes be more candidly expressed thus : " Anything for a quiet life !" Both an aggressive and a supine attitude are equally to be avoided.

To reach the golden mean between the two, the convert must obviously *consider his particular surroundings.* In a household where the change of religion is a " burning question," no doubt it is usually wiser never to *introduce* religion, especially in public conclave—*e.g.*, at table. The same applies to workrooms, or the servants' hall. No result but quarrelling and abuse of the Church is probable when relations as regards religion, are what politicians called " strained."

On the other side, no rule of prudence prevents an occasional quiet word in season, especially in conversation of a more private kind, when the Church is grossly misrepresented by others. Nor should the convert shrink from giving an account of the Faith that is in him—according to the Apostle—when some explanation of Catholic beliefs or practices is evidently expected, or desired, by those with whom he is conversing, or working.

CHAPTER XIV

SACRAMENTALS

To give a full account of this somewhat complex subject would run away with more space than can be spared.

For the purpose of this work it seems sufficient to explain briefly the place which Sacramentals occupy in the Catholic system, and to touch upon those forms of them which are in more common use.

Meaning of term.

The word "sacramental" evidently suggests connection with Sacraments. It used formerly to be applied to those additional rites contained in the full ritual of Sacraments which help to set forth their significance more plainly; as, for example, the blessing and administration of salt in the rite of Baptism; the anointings in the same, first with Holy Oil and then with Holy Chrism. Nowadays these additional rites, the purpose of which is largely didactic, are more commonly called "ceremonies": and the term "sacramental" is usually reserved to certain external rites, or to sacred objects blessed by the Church, and used by her chiefly for contributing to the holiness of her children, but having no necessary connection with the administration of Sacraments.

An aid to memory.

The following medieval "aid to memory" comprises the various forms of Sacramentals: "Praying, Touched, Eating, Confessed, Giving, Blessing." [1]

[1] The original hexameter line runs thus: "Orans, Tinctus, Edens, Confessus, Dans, Benedicens."

To explain this somewhat obscure formula : *Praying* refers to the Lord's Prayer, or "Our Father." *Touched*—which is an imperfect rendering of "Tinctus"—refers to Sacramentals administered through the sense of touch or feeling, such as being sprinkled, or sprinkling oneself with Holy Water, or anointing with Holy Oil out of connection with the reception of Sacraments—*e.g.*, in the consecration of a chalice or a church-bell. *Eating* refers to Blessed Bread, customary in some countries and distributed to those who have not received Holy Communion ; or to other blessed foods. *Confessed* includes the contrite and general avowal of sinfulness apart from sacramental Confession, such as the priest makes at the beginning of the Mass, and the server makes after him in the name of the congregation, or which the priest pronounces, together with words of absolution, over the people, just before administering Communion. The act of *striking one's breast* in humility and contrition is also included under the present head. *Giving* means almsgiving. *Blessing* includes a large number of Sacramentals, such as any blessing given with at least the sign of the Cross by a priest, and blessed objects such as Ashes, Palms, Candles, Medals, Statues, Rosaries, Scapulars, Badges, the blessing of houses, etc. Its meaning.

Just as in the case of the Sacraments we have those (six out of the seven) which exist only *in the making*, and one—the reserved Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle—which exists *permanently* after the making, and independently of its reception, so, under the heads, for example, of Eating and Blessing, we have Sacramentals which remain permanently after being made, such as the blessed food, and blessed objects of devotion, like those just now enumerated. This is one of the analogies that subsist between these Analogy with Sacraments.

two classes of sanctifying instruments. Both classes bear upon them the seal of the Incarnation, the mystery by which God was given to man through the visible, material form of the Sacred Humanity. The means of grace belonging to the Church of the Incarnation imitate that mystery, conferring the Divine and invisible gift of grace, or assisting the soul to procure it by its co-operation, through outward and visible material signs appealing to one or other of man's senses. Thus, for instance, while the waters of Baptism convey by their inherent virtue a cleansing from original, and actual, sin, the devout use of Holy Water helps *the soul to produce dispositions* which will affect a cleansing from venial sin.

Differences.

But if there are analogies between Sacraments and Sacramentals, there are also very essential differences. (1) With one or two exceptions (*e.g.*, the Lord's Prayer and Almsgiving) they are derived solely from the institution of the Church. Sacraments, on the contrary, are institutions of Christ Himself. (2) The number of the Sacraments is fixed unalterably at seven. Sacramentals are far more numerous, and may be increased according as the Church sees fit for the spiritual good of her children. (3) And here is the most important point of difference: *the way in which Sacraments work their effects in the soul is of a far higher order.* For Sacramentals cannot, as Sacraments do, confer sanctifying grace of their own inherent efficacy, but are only able to contribute indirectly to its acquisition, or directly to its increase, when seconded by the spirtual activity of the person using them.[1]

[1] Thus the idea of a Catholic Sacramental corresponds more or less with the notion of a Sacrament as taught by some of the Reformers—that of an instrument for exciting faith, and through this means indirectly benefiting the soul.

Two errors have to be avoided in estimating the value of Sacramentals. There is the extreme of relying blindly upon the infallible efficacy of the rite performed, or of the object blessed by the ministry of the Church, in total disregard of the need to co-operate with it by personal dispositions of soul. This would savour of unintelligent superstition. The other false extreme is to attach no value at all either to the rite, or the sacred object, and to place the *whole* efficacy of the Sacramental in one's own spiritual industries. This would be the opposite error of depreciating the dignity of the Church and the force of her pleading with her Divine Head. Thus, for example, it would be superstitious to hang a blessed medal, or Agnus Dei, round one's neck in the same spirit that a savage might some wild beast's tooth, regarding it as being in itself an invincible charm, and without any religious intent. On the other hand, it would be a depreciation of the Church to think nothing of the medal as blessed by her with power received from Our Divine Lord. Two false extremes.

Superficial critics—and not non-Catholic ones alone—are at times over-ready to fasten the first of the above errors upon the unlettered poor, not seeing that their confidence in Sacramentals springs from their dispositions of lively faith and of reverence for the Church, instead of from superstition. It is true that among those poor who are negligent some may be found who would on no account miss receiving Ashes or Palms on the days appointed, yet are not equally alive to the absolute duty of receiving the Sacraments at Easter. A sad lack of a due sense of proportion, if you will—though of a different kind to that against which the convert was just now warned. But this does not prove that such backsliders are *superstitious* when they receive Ashes or Palms. Alleged superstition.

As Our Lord said, they should do the one and not omit the other. But their act, as we have reason to think, is very commonly accompanied with spiritual acts, a secret acknowledgment of their serious shortcomings in other respects, and an underlying hope in God's mercy that he will sooner or later receive them back to repentance, and that the Sacramental will help in that direction.

Faith of the poor.

What is often so strongly marked in the simple poor, and is so greatly wanting in many of higher education, is a deep appreciation and respect for anything whatever that has been hallowed by the touch of the Church of Christ, their spiritual Mother.

And this leads us to inquire what it is that constitutes the dignity and value of these Sacramentals, considered in themslves and apart from the devotional acts which accompany their use. For, as we have just seen, to overlook this aspect of the matter would be an error.

The dignity of the Church.

The Sacred Scriptures teach us that the Church is the Mystical Bride of Jesus Christ. He "delivered Himself up for it . . . that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. . . ."[1] This very figure of a "bride" intimates the closeness of the union—the moral oneness, the solidarity—subsisting between Christ and His Church on earth—upon which, as St. Paul is showing, the sanctity of the nuptial union between Christians is modelled. Further, the Apostle, in requiring wives to obey their husbands, urges as his reason that "the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church."

Power of Church's Mediation.

Christ is, besides, the Great Mediator and High-Priest, "ever living to make intercession for us" in Heaven,[2] while His moral body, the

[1] Ephes. v. 25-27. [2] Heb. vii. 25.

Church on earth, shares in that powerful intercession, which—as we know from Our Lord[1]—is always heard by the Father. It is by uniting her pleadings with those of His Divine Heart that she obtains for her Sacramentals their power of contributing to the spiritual and temporal well-being of her children and His. When the priest, conforming to her directions, makes a Sacramental, it is not that individual Father So-and-So who is praying and blessing. The full dignity and pleading force of the Mystic Bride of the Mediator is gathered up and concentrated into his official act. This is why a Catholic, penetrated with the spirit of faith, values and treats with all reverence every gift of the kind coming from the holy hand of his spiritual Mother, the Church, be it Holy Water, a Palm, a Candle, a Medal, or anything else. Any other attitude of mind would be a slight upon the High-Priesthood of Christ, shared by Him with His "other self"—the Church of His Precious Blood.

Illustration from Rubrics.

A rubric of the Missal inculcates this lesson of reverence by prescribing that when blessed objects are distributed during the course of the Church's public ritual, the recipient shall first of all kiss the *gift of Holy Church*, and afterwards the hand of her minister.

A Protestant taint.

The Puritan spirit with which Protestantism is always more or less tainted, tends to despise outward religious forms and emblems—the image of Jesus crucified not excepted. We who live in Protestant surroundings need to beware lest we imbibe something of its spirit, which is one of self-congratulation upon what it calls the "simplicity" of its worship. Whereas, a contempt for visible signs as vehicles of grace springs from an inadequate grasp of the fundamental mystery of Christianity, the Incarnation—or

[1] John xi. 42.

the taking of a visible and material form by the Eternal Word as an instrument for conveying to us Divine and immaterial gifts. From this root-defect there arises, consequently, a low conception of the dignity and powers of the Church of the Incarnation, in ordaining her Sacramentals. These are—on a lower scale as compared to Sacraments—miniature Incarnations, concealing the Divine element beneath material and sensible forms. The despiser of outward religious forms and symbols also forgets that Christianity is meant for *human* beings, and not for pure spirits.

The graces and favours for which the Church pleads in the making of Sacramentals are various. These can be seen in the prayers which she uses in making them.

Sacramentals and venial sin.

Remission of Venial Sin.—There is, however, one effect of Sacramentals which calls for special mention in this place, and that is the *remission of venial sins*. There is a difference of opinion among Catholic theologians as to the *manner* in which this valuable effect is brought about, but there is none as to the *fact*. The far commoner view, as to the manner, is that the forgiveness is not due to any special virtue attached by God to the Sacramental rite considered in itself and apart from the dispositions which it helps to excite in the soul of the recipient. Thus, for example, when a Catholic uses Holy Water on entering a church, or his bedroom, it is not the mere use that cleanses him from these minor stains, but the dispositions of heart which that use helps him to produce, in virtue of the pleading of the Church while blessing the water.

The *Pater* and Alms-giving.

A word may be useful concerning two of the Sacramentals included in the Latin line quoted above—viz., the "Our Father" and "Alms-

giving." These appear to stand in a separate class of their own. For, though adopted by the Church, they are not mere Church institutions, and the promises of spiritual blessings attached to them are of Divine origin. Our Lord Himself made the "Our Father," and the Written Word of God proclaims the benefits of Almsgiving. How, then, can these two things be classed with instruments of holiness ordained by the Church? The difference must be admitted. Yet theological authors, like Père W. Arendt,[1] hold that the practices in question may be regarded as Sacramentals at least in an analogous sense. And, in fact, they rightly fall under the author's carefully worded and laboriously proved definition, given at the conclusion of his work: "Sacramentals are signs used in the Church of Christ for the external worship of God, to which God Himself has promised an instrumental efficacy for conferring supernatural helps upon those who have recourse to them." All Sacramentals must derive their power of giving supernatural aid from God. In the case of some of them, such as the "Our Father" or "Almsgiving," their virtue is set forth in Scripture, in the case of others—like "Holy Water" or "Blessed Ashes"—it is contained implicitly in the general promises made by Christ to His Church. A little reflection on the definition just quoted will show that it sufficiently covers both these groups of Sacramentals.

The Lord's Prayer.

The convert will take note of the very slight difference in the Catholic version of the "Our Father," which has "Our Father *who*" instead of "Our Father *which*." The matter is in itself

[1] Professor of Theology at the Gregorian University, Rome, in his masterly treatise, *De Sacramentalibus*, 1900, whom we are here following throughout.

of little moment, except that conformity to Catholic usages even in smaller matters is a mark of the hearty convert. The words added by Anglicans and other Protestant bodies after the last petition, namely, "For Thine is the kingdom," etc., do not belong to the Lord's Prayer, although occurring in the Anglican version of Matthew vi. The undenominational "Revised Version" does not include them in the Gospel text, any more than does our Catholic Douay Version—one out of many tributes paid by the unbiassed scholarship expended on the Revision to the authority of the Catholic Vulgate.

Saint Augustine and the *Pater.*

The effect of *remitting venial sin* would seem —in the case of the "Our Father"—to be especially connected with the petition: ". . . and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." In his Sixty-first Sermon, St. Augustine, after enumerating certain forms of *mortal* sin, adds: "Apart from such sins, there are other ways in which we may offend. . . . There are small sins. . . . Small but numerous. Let us, therefore, say daily, and say from our hearts—doing what we say: 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.' We make a promise to God and enter into an agreement with Him; the Lord says to thee: 'Do thou forgive and I will forgive thee. If thou hast not forgiven, it is thou who dost stand against thyself, not I against thee.'" And again, in his Seventeenth Sermon, he says: "God has appointed a daily remedy in His Church for a time at which mercy is previously to be sought for, according to which we are to say: 'Forgive us our trespasses,' etc., so that, with our face cleansed by these words, we may approach the altar and partake of the Body and Blood of Christ. We have a parallel passage in his Twenty-sixth Tractate on the Gospel of St. John. Having

warned the faithful against "eating unworthily" —that is, receiving Communion while conscious of mortal sin—St. Augustine continues: "See, therefore, brethren, that you eat of this Heavenly Bread after a spiritual manner; bring innocence with you to the altar. Though you be guilty of daily sins, let them at least not be deadly ones. Before you approach the altar, be careful to say: 'Forgive us our trespasses,' etc. If thou forgivest, it shall be forgiven thee; approach confidently: it is bread, and not poison."

Connection with Frequent Communion.

These last two passages have a special bearing upon the practice of Frequent and Daily Communion, since they confirm the teaching of Catholic theology that Confession is only obligatory before Communion when a person has committed *mortal* sin.

As for venial sin, the Council of Trent teaches that there are many other ways besides Confession of obtaining pardon for venial sins, or—as the Fathers of the Church and Councils call them—"daily" sins. Sacramentals are some of these means, and the one now under consideration is particularly suited for intending communicants. As it will be noticed, the petition for "our daily bread" and that for the forgiveness of "trespasses" follow one another immediately. Moreover, both in the Latin Rite of the Mass and the Greek Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, the *Pater Noster* is recited by the Celebrant very shortly before his Communion.

Sprinkling with Holy Water.

The "Asperges."

The celebration of the principal Mass on Sundays is usually preceded by the sprinkling of the congregation with Holy Water—a ceremony, typical of cleansing, which is called the "Asperges," from the first word of the antiphon with

which the rite begins.[1] The water has previously been blessed with some ceremony in the Sacristy (vestry).

Besides this special aspersion, the Church uses the same ceremony of sprinkling on many other occasions (*a*) over the persons—*e.g.*, in the Marriage Service, the blessing of mothers before and after child-birth ; (*b*) over material objects—*e.g.*, in blessing ashes, palms, candles, houses, medals, crosses, crucifixes, rosaries, scapulars, and the like. Thus Holy Water—itself a Sacramental—is largely used in the making of other Sacramentals.

Private aspersion.

Then there is the *private use* of Holy Water, as, for example, signing oneself with it in the form of a cross in entering and leaving a church, or at home. It is to be feared that nowadays it is far rarer than formerly to find Catholics keeping Holy Water stoups in their bed-chambers, except, perhaps, as ornaments or curiosities, and at most containing half-petrified sponges. Have they never noticed the prayers of the Church which accompany the blessing of Holy Water ? While blessing the salt, to be mixed with it, she beseeches God that it " may be for the health of soul and body, and that all fantasies and wickedness, or deceits of diabolical cunning, may fly from the places where the water has been sprinkled, adjured by Him Who will come to judge the living and the dead and the world by fire. Amen." Or, again, in blessing the water itself : " That whatever this water shall moisten in the dwellings or habitations of the faithful may be free from all uncleanness and preserved from harm ; and should anything threaten the safety or tranquillity of the inmates, may it be

[1] The words are taken from the fiftieth Psalm (Prot., fifty-first), verse 8. They are sung by the choir while the priest moves about aspersing the congregation.

banished by the sprinkling of this water," etc. . . . Surely benefits like these are not to be despised! Or is it that we are becoming infected with that impatience of the supernatural, so common in our day, and too often dignified by the critical and sceptical with the title of superior education and enlightenment?

"Blessing."

It is not my purpose to deal with Sacramentals in exhaustive detail. Hence, the heading, "Touched," which in the sense of *anointed* includes no form of Sacramental in common use among the faithful, need not be discussed. The heading, "Eating," calls for no further explanation than that given at the beginning of this section; and "Almsgiving" explains itself. But the alms must be given out of a religious motive, and not merely out of natural benevolence and humanitarianism.

We come now to the last head, "Blessing." Here we have to deal with a very large class of Sacramentals. For convenience' sake we may divide them into: (1) Blessings, or blessed objects, which enter into the Sacred Liturgy of the Church, such as Candles, Ashes, and Palms; (2) those which are ministered to *persons*, or *objects* outside the public offices of the Church, such as the Blessing of Mothers, and of numberless objects, religious or secular, in use among the Catholics.

I. Liturgical Blessings.

Blessing of Candles.

Candles are solemnly blessed before Mass on the feast of the Purification of Our Lady (Feb. 2), called by our Catholic forefathers Candlemas.

Candlemas. But the Roman Missal (Mass Book) also supplies a separate form for blessing candles at any time of the year. In the course of it, the Church prays that, just as candles serve for banishing darkness in the natural order, so, in virtue of the sign of the Cross made over it, the blessed candle may help to drive away from the persons and homes of the faithful all snares and molestations from the powers of darkness.

Symbolism of wax candles.

First of all, a word concerning the candles themselves. Their figurative meaning, or "symbolism," is beautifully explained by our English St. Anselm. To understand him, we must remember that the Church always supposes the candles used in her ritual to be made of wax, and not of our modern substitutes for the same, and also that antiquity assumed the bee—whence the wax is derived—as a type of virginity.[1] St. Anselm writes: "The wax, which is the product of the virginal bee, represents the Flesh of Our Lord; the wick which lies within, His Soul; the flame which burns on the top, His Divinity."

Rubrics.

The laws of the Church, prescribing the use of candles made of wax, are strict, though, for reasons of expense, a *pure* wax is not rigorously insisted on, except in a certain high percentage; and, in that high percentage, only in her more solemn rites, such as Holy Mass, in the case of the essential twelve lights at Benediction, and of the Paschal Candle, blessed with such solemnity on Holy Saturday morning.

Meaning of whole candle.

Besides the figurative meaning of its parts, the candle as a *whole*, and as a means of illumination, is a symbol of Christ the True Light, also of the light of faith by which our minds are enabled to see Divine truths. On Candlemas Day

[1] This seems to explain partly the reference to the virgin martyr, St. Cecilia, in an antiphon of the Divine Office for her feast, Nov. 22, as *apis argumentosa*—"richly laden bee," or, as some would prefer, "busy bee."

we commemorate the presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple by His Mother and St. Joseph, and how holy Simeon, on receiving the Infant Saviour into his arms, uttered the Canticle *Nunc Dimittis*, with its reference to Our Lord as "the Light for a revelation to the Gentiles." Hence the fitness of the lighted candle for this feast.

The rite.

The ceremony of blessing used at the altar on this day has a general similarity of *form* to that observed in the case of Ashes and Palms—that is to say, prayers suited to the ecclesiastical feast and to the figurative possibilities of the object blessed, are followed by the sprinkling of the latter with Holy Water and the use of incense—a scriptural figure of *prayer*.[1] The priest receives his candle first, then the assistants in the sanctuary, and after them the body of the congregation. Each recipient, except the celebrant, on taking the candle, kisses it *first*, and then the hand of the priest. The candles are all lighted at the Gospel of the Mass and held in the hand standing, during its recital, or—if it be High Mass (or Missa Cantata)—while the Gospel is sung. They are again lighted at the *Sanctus* of the Mass. They should finally be put out as soon as the priest has received Communion in both kinds.

Precautions.

Both for safety and in order not to cover the benches with candle-wax (there is less need nowadays to counsel regard for clothes, except perhaps for other people's) the candle should be held vertically straight and at a sufficient distance from the person and from neighbours.

Graces attached.

The graces prayed for by the Church in framing this Sacramental are chiefly : health of soul and body, on land and on sea, an increase of charity, freedom from the blindness of passion, and a clear perception of Heavenly truths. These

[1] See Ps. cxl. (Prot., cxli.) 2.

favours are asked for through the merits of Jesus Christ and the intercession of His Holy Mother.

Procession.

The full ritual for this occasion comprises a Procession with lighted candles during which antiphons are sung by the choir alluding to the Presentation as recorded in Luke ii. 22-38.[1]

Contributions for candles.

Candles, especially if of wax, are not bought for nothing, and not every mission can afford to distribute them gratis to a whole congregation for keeping. So our convert, accustomed, it may be, to a State-aided Church, must not be surprised if offerings of money are sought for to defray the expense. In some missions the difficulty is met by the faithful leaving the candles behind them in the church for the use of the altar during the year. This plan has the drawback of depriving them of the permanent Sacramental. Both objections could be obviated by a return of the old Catholic lay-custom of sending in to the priest *betimes* offerings of candles—of a given pattern—for the ceremony. In place of this, some Catholics send in candles with their names attached, to be placed with the official supply during the rite of blessing, and to be called for after the ceremony.

Blessing and Imposition of Ashes.

The association of ashes with humble penitence as its outward sign is thoroughly scriptural, as any reader of the Bible knows. The difference

[1] According to several weighty authorities, including Benedict XIV., whom the able liturgist, Dom Guéranger, O.S.B., prefers to follow, this Procession was formerly a Christian adaptation of the torchlight festival "Amburbalia," of pagan Rome. Others trace it to the "Lupercalia," held by the Romans in February. It was the wise policy of the Early Church to wean converts from their pagan customs by providing Christian substitutes for them. See *Liturgical Year; Christmas*, translated from Guéranger, vol. ii., "Blessing of Candles."

between the Old Law and the Christian Dispensation does not consist in the elimination from the New Law of outward rites and symbols, but in the greater spiritual perfection and efficacy of Christian ones. Man's nature calls for an external element in worship, especially when worshipping the Man-God.

Old and New Law compared.

When St. Paul speaks of the Jewish rites as "empty and needy," he does not refer to their inutility *as signs*, but to their lack of that superior value which such elements of worship acquire under the New Law through the Incarnation of the Son of God. He would have had scant sympathy with those wanderers from Catholic truth who, in later times, were to quote the words of Christ at Jacob's Well—about worshipping "in spirit and in truth," as an argument against the multiplication of rites and symbols in Catholic worship. We are beings partly spiritual, but also partly material, and if our worship is to engage the *whole* man, it must combine an outward and visible element, as well as an inward and spiritual one. Thus the Church has adopted the use of ashes as an outward expression of the heart's repentance and self-humiliation, and elevated it into a Sacramental.

Ashes from Palms.

The ashes employed are made by burning the blessed palms which have remained over from the previous Holy Week. The occasion on which she blesses and imposes them is "Ash Wednesnay"—the first day of the season of Lent, as the latter has been fixed and extended during later centuries.[1]

[1] In earlier centuries of Christianity Lent lasted thirty-six days—that is, approximately a tithe of *one-tenth* of the whole year—starting after our First Sunday in Lent, but not including the Sundays in the reckoning, any more than they are included now. Later on, the four weekdays preceding the First Sunday were added to the season, to make up forty days, in remembrance of Our Lord's fast in the desert. (*Catholic Dictionary :* Lent.)

The rite. The priest, vested in purple—the colour of Church mourning—recites the beautiful prayers of the ritual, afterwards sprinkling the Ashes with Holy Water and incensing them. Then, having himself been signed (or signing himself) in the form of the cross on the crown of the head (the method used with all who are clerics) and after signing all his assistants, he proceeds to the people, who kneel by relays at the altar rails, and signs each forehead[1] with Ashes, saying: "Remember, O man, that thou art dust and that unto dust thou shalt return." As nothing is delivered into the hands of the worshipper, the usual kissing of the gift and of the minister's hand has no place in this ceremony.

Blessing of Palms.

Palms are only blessed on Palm Sunday—the last Sunday in Lent and the first day of Holy Week. It should be noticed that the name "Passion Week" is applied by Catholics to the seven days preceding Palm Sunday, and not to the last seven days of Lent. The fact that during the latter time the events of the Sacred Passion are specially commemorated may account for the different terminology adopted by some non-Catholics.

Owing to former difficulty in procuring real palms in these northern latitudes, it used to be a very general practice to employ instead sprigs of willow or of broom, as being the best makeshifts obtainable; and we know that other branches besides those of the palm were actually used by the enthusiastic but fickle Jewish crowds to grace Our Lord's triumphant entry into the city of Jerusalem. But of late years commerce

[1] Clerics *only* are signed with ashes on the crown of the head.

has placed large palm branches within easier reach, and it is no longer costly to supply each member of a congregation at least with a single palm-leaf, sometimes fashioned into an artistic shape.

The rite followed at the Blessing of Palms—which takes place, like the two previous blessings, before the Mass—is much more elaborate and varied than with candles and ashes. Yet the main features of prayer, hand-blessings, aspersion, and incensing remain unchanged. The order of the ceremony may be found fully set out in any "Missal" or in "Holy Week Books."[1]

When there are a large number to receive palms, the celebrant priest is sometimes assisted by others in the distribution. The palm being an emblem of victory, it is natural that in her prayers the Church should invoke upon those bearing it such blessings as victory over the "empire of death" and over the assaults of spiritual foes, and a share in the triumph of Our Lord's glorious resurrection.

II. Blessings outside the Liturgy.

Blessing of Persons.

The Regeneration of Society.

Our Blessed Lord came to regenerate human society. So we are not surprised to find that He should have guided His Church to invoke special blessing upon the source of that society—Christian Maternity. There are three blessings of this kind. Of that given separately to the bride in the Marriage Service we say nothing here, since it forms part of the rite belonging to the Sacra-

[1] As we have no space for a description of the beautiful services of Holy Week, the reader is referred to publications on this subject. See *Leaflets* Nos. 56, 57, 58, 59, and 60, of the English Catholic Truth Society, 69, Southwark Bridge Road, London, S.E.; also *Holy Week*, by H. Thurston, S.J.

ment of Matrimony, and we are dealing here only with Sacramentals that are unconnected with the administration of Sacraments.

Blessings for Mothers.

The two remaining blessings are the blessing of the Mother *before* and *after* Childbirth. The former, strangely enough, appears to be in less common demand than the latter.

Blessing after Childbirth.—This beautiful rite is the Christian successor to the Jewish "Purification," to which, out of obedience to law, but without any other moral necessity, the inviolate and sinless Virgin Mother of our All-Holy Lord submitted herself in all humility.

Joyful character of "Churching."

The introductory rubric of the Ritual opens thus: "If any mother should wish, according to pious and laudable custom, to come to the church in order to return thanks for her safe delivery, and should seek a blessing from the priest, the priest shall," etc. From this we gather two things: (1) That there is no *obligation* to avail oneself of this rite. (2) We see, further, how the virginal and gladsome birth of the Redeemer has eliminated from this ceremony all trace of sadness and humiliation, and turned its spirit into one of joy and of blessing upon mother and child. This will plainly appear from a perusal of the service, which is to be found in most general Prayer-Books.

Offering to priest.

It is customary on the occasion of being "churched"—as at baptism—for an offering of money to be made to the priest, the amount being usually fixed by episcopal ordinance.

Also, among blessings to *persons*, for which forms are appointed, one may mention here the blessing of children. It has not been thought necessary to allude to the ordinary blessing given upon request by priest or bishop without any formal ceremony in ordinary daily intercourse.

Blessing of Material Objects: Blessing of Houses.

Easter Blessing.

The number of blessed objects is legion. Let us begin with the blessing of dwelling-houses (or other buildings where men congregate). This ceremony is chiefly associated with Easter, when the water, hallowed with peculiar solemnity during the Consecration of the Baptism Font on Holy Saturday morning, is employed in the blessing of houses, should their inmates desire the privilege.

Though a blessing is invoked upon "the house," as well as upon "all dwelling in it," it is the building as sheltering the applicants for this exercise of the ministry, rather than the mere material structure itself that is sanctified. In this respect, the rite in question appears to differ somewhat from the blessing of some religious object, like a rosary or a medal, which under normal conditions remains permanently blessed for ever. A house, on the contrary, *may* be blessed every Easter.

In blessing a house, the prayers are said in some public and central spot, and are followed by the sprinkling of Holy Water there, and in the principal parts and rooms of the house.

There is also a separate form for the blessing of a *new* house. Any house, however, can be blessed at any time of the ecclesiastical year.[1]

[1] The number of *secular* objects, for the blessing of which forms have been drawn up, is extremely large. In this way the Church makes use of created things, and of man's needs, and of his efforts at progress, in order to raise his mind from earth to Heaven. The long list includes such things as horses, flocks, bees, crops, food, medicine, wells, and bridges. As the Catholic Church is so often charged with being averse to scientific progress, it is instructive to note also among objects of her blessings, railways, ships, telegraphs, and dynamos for electric lighting. Nay, the Press not long since reproduced a photograph showing a French Bishop solemnly blessing aeroplanes on a course for aviation.

Different aspects of pious objects.

We have still to deal with a very large class of *religious* objects that are capable of being converted into Sacramentals by the Church's blessing. At our present stage, these only concern us as merely *blessed*. Besides being blessed, however, they may also be *Indulgenced*, which means that their use will enable a person to gain Indulgences. Again, such objects are connected with various special forms of Catholic devotion. The consideration of them from both these additional points of view must be postponed to a later page.

Form of blessing used.

As regards the simple *blessing* of these pious objects, there is little to be said except that the rite used may, in some cases, be confined to the priest's making a sign of the Cross over them, with his hand, while in others it is necessary to recite besides an appointed form of prayer and to sprinkle with Holy Water. Incense is not used except in Liturgical Blessings, or in the blessing of a grave that is situated in non-Catholic ground, or ground not previously blessed.[1]

Meanwhile, we must now turn our attention to certain commoner, though not obligatory, Catholic practices, as claiming precedence in order of importance.

[1] This will happen when a convert has to be buried in a family vault lying in non-Catholic ground. That this can be done is a point for intending converts to notice. For the thought that she could not be buried with her non-Catholic husband has before now proved a sentimental obstacle to a wife's conversion.

CHAPTER XV

ORDINARY DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES

In this chapter we will review such religious practices as may be called "Ordinary," because adopted by Catholics generally whatever be their individual spiritual standard.

The Sign of the Cross.

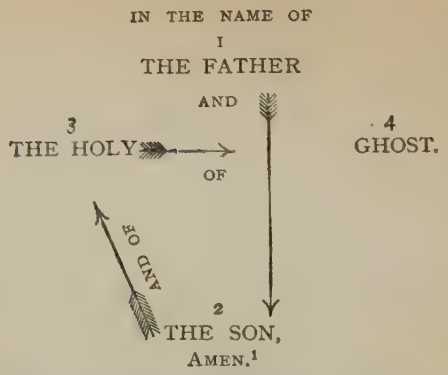
A non-Catholic, after visiting a Catholic church, once reported that he had witnessed a very curious proceeding. "The worshippers," he said, "on entering the church, dipped their fingers in a dish of water, and then touched themselves in four places." This was an outsider's version of the sign of the Cross made after taking Holy Water from the stoup in the church porch.

The Cross is made by touching the parts of the body indicated, with the finger-tips of the *right* hand, and mainly with the second finger.

How to sign oneself.

The following diagram will help to show how the sign of the Cross should be made—*e.g.*, at the beginning of prayers, grace before meals, on entering the church, etc.

In the diagram, 1 = the forehead; 2 = the breast; 3 = the *left* shoulder; and 4 = the *right* shoulder.



Variety of custom.

In some countries it is customary to end up the above by kissing a cross formed by placing the thumb of the right hand across the first finger of the same. But unless one has been trained to this from childhood, it would be a trifle eccentric to adopt the practice if not usual in the country where one lives.

The corresponding words.

It is more usual, when setting oneself formally to pray, to accompany the manual action described above with the words corresponding to it : " In the name of the Father," etc. Indeed, for gaining the Indulgence this is indispensable.

Two Indulgences.

There are two Indulgences attached to this pious practice : (1) Of 50 days, each time, for signing oneself *and* saying the words (Pius IX., July 28, 1863). (2) Of 100 days, if the use of Holy Water be added (Pius IX., March 23, 1866).[2]

[1] This division of words at 3 and 4 seems more correct than 3, " the Holy Ghost." 4, " Amen "—*i.e.*, imitating the action of the priest at Mass. But the difference is unimportant for the laity.

[2] Throughout the present volume, in the matter of Indulgences, the writer follows the authoritative work, *Les Indulgences*, by Rev. P. F. Beringer, S.J., Consultor to the (former) Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, Rome, edition 1905 : Lethielleux, Paris. All questions relating to Indulgences have, under the late reorganization of the Roman Curia by Pius X., been now transferred to the Holy Office.

The way to take Holy Water is to dip the middle digit of the right hand in it.

The sign of a Christian.

"It is by the sign of the Cross that one knows the Christian—a sacred sign our ancestors in the Faith, as Tertullian witnesses, prefixed to all their actions. It recalls to our mind the great mysteries of our holy religion, and when made with attention and devotion draws down upon us Divine blessings, and puts to flight the temptations of the Evil Spirit."[1] The great mysteries referred to are those of the Blessed Trinity and of the Incarnation and Death on the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Confessing Christ: an example.

Beringer, in recording the above Indulgences, mentions an interesting and edifying incident—namely, that the grant of these Indulgences was the result of a presentation made to Pius IX., by Mgr. Gaume of two works of his—one on the sign of the Cross, and the other on the use of Holy Water. The former of these was suggested to the author by the Christian bravery of a Paris schoolboy in enduring ridicule from irreligious companions on account of his blessing himself before and after meals.

Application.

The moral for the convert—and not for the convert alone—is not to yield to a shamefaced human respect in this or other matters of daily Catholic practice. There are, no doubt, cases—of less frequent occurrence in England, perhaps—in which the public performance of practices that do not bind under sin—such as saying "grace" at meals openly and signing oneself—would provoke not only a little surprise, which does not matter, but ridicule and blasphemy against religion. This would probably be more injurious to God than the observance would be honourable.[2] But, for fear

[1] Beringer, vol. i., p. 157.

[2] This must not be taken as encouraging youths and maidens to give in to certain worldly parents, who, upon their children coming home from college or school for good, devote

of self-delusion, people should make sure that what they are mainly anxious to prevent is not *personal discomfort*, rather than contempt of religion. If they omit a practice chiefly out of dislike for a trifling humiliation, then they would do well to recall Our Lord's words about being ashamed of Him before men.

Use in ritual.

The sign of the Cross is used profusely in Catholic worship and ceremonial.[1]

The "triple" signing.

We have so far dealt with the "simple" sign of the Cross. But there is, besides, the "triple" form of it, used by the priest at the beginning of the Gospel in the Mass, and very commonly imitated by those assisting at it. It is made by first crossing the thumb and first finger of the right hand, and, with the tip of the thumb, describing the form of the Cross, first on the forehead, then over the lips, and lastly on the breast.[2]

GRACE should be said before and after meals.

GENUFLECTION.

"Genuflection" is the technical term for the act of kneeling and rising again, as distinct from the permanent posture of kneeling during time of prayer.

How to genuflect.

It has two forms: *single* and *double*. The "single genuflection is made with the *right* knee, and no other: the knee should just touch the ground. A jerky "bob," or curtsey, is unbecoming and irreverent. One should surely not take

themselves to the task of "knocking all that pious nonsense out of them," as they satanically express it. This is breaking down the outer spiritual defences of the young just when their greatest need of protection against the world is beginning.

[1] For some interesting facts and figures on this point see the work on *Sacramentals*, by A. A. Lambing, LL.D. Benziger Bros., New York.

[2] A still more elaborate form is adopted in Spain, consisting of a "triple" signing, followed by a "simple" one.

less pains in paying reverence to God "the King of kings" than one would in showing honour to an earthly Sovereign," or head of the State.[1]

Those less active in body will find it a help, while in the act of genuflecting, to press the open palm of the hand upon the left leg, above the knee. This especially assists *rising*.

Single genuflection.

The "single" genuflection is made towards the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the Tabernacle, before taking one's place in church: also, whenever one passes the centre of the Altar—*when the Blessed Sacrament is reserved there.* When it is not, a simple inclination of the head towards the Crucifix on the main altar suffices, *except* during the last three days of Holy Week, when a *single* genuflection should by rights be made to the Crucifix, on account of the mysteries of the Passion recalled at that season.

From the above it follows that if a person's seat is in a side aisle, and the centre of the church has to be crossed in order to reach it, a genuflection is due to the Blessed Sacrament, *on crossing*, which need not be repeated on reaching the seat.

The *posture* of kneeling (on both knees) is suitable whether one prays before the Blessed Sacrament, or before a statue, or picture, of Our Lady, or of some Saint. But the act of genuflection is by custom reserved for God, whether present in the Tabernacle, or—during the last days of Holy Week—represented on the Crucifix.

Eucharistic teaching of children.

Parents should take pains to teach their children to genuflect properly. This care will help much in their *early eucharistic training*,[2] if the *reason* be explained to them, and such early training, by quickening their intelligence of the Real

[1] Compare the amount of practice a débutante at a royal drawing-room goes through beforehand to produce a graceful curtsey.

[2] See *English Messenger of the S. Heart*, Sept., 1910, p. 238.

Presence, will ripen them all the sooner for that most desirable event—namely, *an early First Communion.*

Double genuflection.

The *double* genuflection[1] consists in putting both knees to the ground—*i.e.*, first the right and then the left one—at the same time making a moderate inclination of head and body. It is unusual in most countries to prostrate oneself nearly to the ground. Perhaps the fervent convert will feel that even such profound obeisance is not too much for the Real Presence. Certainly it is not too much, nor enough. But for this very reason there is not much gained by exceeding the approved custom of God's Church. The only effect would be to attract attention by singularity. We may prostrate our minds and hearts as low as we like, and that is the *more* important thing. It is the mental attitude that chiefly determines the *quality* of the worship outwardly paid, that attitude varying according as we kneel to an earthly Sovereign, to a Saint, or to Our Lady, and it differs *essentially* when we kneel to Almighty God present in the Holy Sacrament.

This double genuflection is always made on passing before the Blessed Sacrament when the latter is *exposed*, or is outside the Tabernacle of the Altar, either during the service of Benediction, or on those occasions when It is left exposed on the altar for the adoration of the faithful, or, again, when removed from the Tabernacle in the ciborium,[2] for the administration of Holy Communion, either during Mass, or apart from it.

During Benediction or Communion.

Thus, if a person enter the church after Benediction has begun, or during time of Exposition, or while the priest is giving Holy Communion, a

[1] Sometimes called "adoring."

[2] Ciborium—literally vessel for food—our Divine Food, the Eucharist. Unlike a chalice, it has a close-fitting lid, to which, when the vessel is in use, is attached a white or golden veil

double genuflection should replace the ordinary single one. In the last-named instance, one may give it as a general rule that a double genuflection is due from the moment the priest opens the Tabernacle until he has closed it after giving Communion. Communicants will conform to the spirit of this rule by not rising from their knees, after receiving, till the Tabernacle is closed —*i.e.*, *unless*—as said in the directions for receiving —*their places are wanted by other communicants.*

The Angelus.

This ancient act of devotion, commemorating thrice daily the Incarnation of the Son of God for us, and the Divine maternity of Mary, was particularly dear to pre-Reformation England. So deeply did it take root in that land, called "Our Lady's Dowry," that even now, in some once Catholic churches, the Angelus bell is still rung, morning, noon, and night, though probably not one in a thousand parishioners, nor even the ringer himself, knows the reason why. The material act has survived the havoc of the "Great Rebellion," while the devotion which was its soul, and gave it life and meaning, has long been lost to the nation.

The bell as reminder.

Those who live near to a Catholic church or convent will generally be reminded to say the Angelus by the sounding of the bell—at least if, in the case of smaller missions, anyone can be found to undertake that office. Indeed, not all missions have a bell to ring.

The form of the Angelus prayer may be found in any Catholic Prayer-Book.

The Angelus is said early in the morning, at midday, and in the evening somewhere about six o'clock.

It is said kneeling, *except* (*a*) on Saturday *evening*, (*b*) at noon as well as evening on Saturdays

during Lent (Benedict XIV., Apr. 20, 1742; Leo XIII., May 20, 1896), and (*c*) during the whole of Sunday—on which occasions it is said *standing*.

During Easter-time (*i.e.*, at and from noon of Holy Saturday till noon of Saturday in Whit Week *inclusive*) the prayer *Regina Coeli* (Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia) is substituted for the Angelus. It is said *standing* at *all* times and on *all* days.

These are the ideal conditions. But so anxious is the Church that this act of piety should not be hindered by accidental obstacles that she has given every facility for its exercise. Thus, (1) those out of reach of the bell can gain the Indulgences provided they recite the Angelus more or less about the times appointed (Pius VI., Mar. 18, 1781). (2) Those prevented from kneeling, or who cannot pay attention to the bell, can gain the Indulgences provided they recite the prayer in the morning, *or* about noon, *or* at evening. But to profit by this particular concession, the concluding versicle "Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God," etc., and the Collect, "Pour forth, we beseech Thee," etc., must be added, which is *not* necessary in the case of the other grants.[1] Further, should a person not know the Angelus (or the *Regina Coeli*) by heart, or be unable to read it from a book, *five "Hail Marys"* will do instead (Leo XIII., Apr. 3, 1884). (3) Those who do not know the *Regina Coeli* may gain the Indulgences during Paschal-time by reciting the Angelus.[2]

From the above it follows that for gaining the Indulgences attached to this practice, the prayers

[1] Beringer, vol. i., p. 255.

[2] During the last days of Holy Week the Indulgences can be gained, though the bell is not rung (Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, June 19, 1885).

must be said in the postures prescribed and to the sound of the bell, except when there is no bell to be heard, or one is prevented from attending to it, or—when kneeling is the proper posture —one is hindered from kneeling.

Daily Mass.

This practice has been touched upon in the preceding chapter. If it is here placed under "ordinary" Catholic practices, that is because daily attendance at Holy Mass is a very common custom among good (I do not mean exceptionally holy) Catholics, who have the leisure and opportunity.

Daily Communion.

Similarly, after the Decree of Pius X., "On Daily Reception of the Eucharist," one may rightly regard Daily Communion as an "ordinary" Catholic practice. We read in the excellent paper presented by the Rev. Herbert Lucas, S.J., at the Eucharistic Congress of Westminster, 1908: "To this question"—namely, as to the reason of the distinction between "Frequent" and "Daily" Communion—"the answer is, beyond all reasonable doubt, that Daily Communion is recommended *per se* as the more normal practice for all those faithful who have this priceless boon within reach. Frequent—as distinguished from Daily—Communion is recommended to those for whom, by reason of occupations, of their distance from church or chapel, or other suchlike obstacles, the daily reception of the Sacrament is not possible, as to those also—too many, alas!—who cannot be persuaded to avail themselves of their birthright as Christians in all its fulness." In other words, according to the Church's mind, Daily Communion, far from being an extra-

The soul's normal diet.

ordinary form of piety, is, on the contrary, to be regarded as the devotional rule for every Catholic, and less frequent Communion as abnormal. What is this but to say that daily reception of the Eucharist, though not of obligation, is to be counted among "ordinary" Catholic practices?

Nightly Examination of Conscience.

This self-questioning as to our conduct towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves, during the day that is closing, naturally forms part of Night Prayers, already touched upon under the general heading of "Prayer."

Sorrow for ingratitude.

It is, of course, to be followed by acts of sorrow to God for the sins discovered (and undiscovered) and a purpose to amend them. It may fitly be preceded by *thanksgiving* for the benefits of the past, since a sense of God's favours will assist our contrition for the *ingratitude* of sin.

Practical hint.

The time given to this exercise will often be brief, and needs to be employed to the best advantage. This end will be better secured by at once addressing our attention to those points in which we know ourselves by experience to be most liable to offend, than by running hastily over some long list of questions in a book, many of which may be quite inapplicable to our habitual conduct. For, if anything extraordinary should happen to have occurred, this unwonted transgression will come before our minds without any searching on our part.

Saying the Beads.

The Rosary of Our Lady.—The recital of the Rosary of Our Lady (five decades) deserves to be considered an "ordinary" practice, so widespread is its use amongst us. In some families—though it is to be feared their number is on the decrease—it is recited aloud every day in com-

mon, at least by some members of the household.[1] Very many say the beads daily in private. The nature of this time-honoured devotion, the spread of which is so largely due to the zeal of the Holy Order of St. Dominic, will be more fully discussed when, in our next chapter but one, we shall resume the subject of Sacramentals coming under the head, "Blessing," and shall treat of pious objects.

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.[2]

The practice of attending Benediction, though never obligatory, forms a suitable addition to the religious observance of Sunday or of Holy Days of Obligation. It is also a way of marking days of Devotion, or other feast days. Those who are not far distant from a church, or a convent chapel where outsiders are admitted, would do well to attend any Benedictions that chanced to occur during the week. In very many churches Benediction is given on Thursday or Friday: in few does a whole week pass without this service being held.

Character of Benediction.

We may regard Benediction in the light of a royal audience granted by our Heavenly King in His Holy Sacrament, to which He gladly welcomes all His loving subjects, giving them a special *blessing* before they leave. (Hence the term "Benediction.") For He is raised aloft in the hands of the priest, who makes the sign of the Cross over the bowed heads of the people with the Blessed Sacrament, contained in a *mon-*

[1] Pius IX. granted special Indulgences for the recital of the Rosary in common. See p. 244.

[2] For fuller explanation of Benediction, see *Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament*, by Rev. S. Bampfield; or *What is Benediction?* by the present writer; both published by the English Catholic Truth Society. Short tracts.

strance,[1] or—on less solemn occasions—in a closed *ciborium*.

Ritual observed.

The order of the service may be seen in any ordinary Catholic Prayer-Book. In place of the Litany of Our Lady which, in England, usually forms the middle portion of the rite, other pieces are sometimes sung, or prayers in the vernacular approved for public use are interpolated. But Benediction invariably closes with the chanting of the *Tantum Ergo*,[2] a collect in honour of the Blessed Sacrament sung by the priest, and then the Blessing itself, the latter being followed by the recital of the "Divine Praises"[3] in the mother tongue, the congregation repeating each line after the priest. Local customs differ as to the addition of the motet *Adoremus* and the psalm *Laudate Dominum* (Ps. cxvi.).

"Exposition."

This seems a convenient place for a word about "Exposition" of the Blessed Sacrament, which may be regarded as a prolonged Benediction service. It begins like one. The Blessed Sacrament is taken from the Tabernacle, placed in the monstrance, and the latter is deposited upon the Altar-throne. Then the service—as far as the celebrant and assistants are concerned—is broken

[1] A "monstrance" is a silver or gilt vessel, in the centre of which the Sacred Host is exposed to view behind glass, the whole being placed conspicuously, either on the Altar or on a throne above the Tabernacle. A "ciborium" somewhat resembles a chalice (or cup used at Mass) with a lid. It is covered with a veil, and the consecrated particles for Holy Communion are reserved in it, inside the tabernacle.

[2] *I.e.*, the last two stanzas of the hymn to the Blessed Sacrament, *Pange Lingua* ("Sing, my tongue, the Saviour's glory"), by St. Thomas Aquinas. (Died A.D. 1274.)

[3] Composed by Father Felici, S.J., 1797, for his Confraternity of the Sacred Heart for sailors (see p. 279), publicly recommended by Pius IX. as an act of reparation for sins of blasphemy, and indulgenced by him. The invocation to the Sacred Heart, which they now contain, was added by Leo XIII., who increased the Indulgences at the same time (Beringer).

off, the Blessed Sacrament being *left exposed* amidst lights, and perhaps flowers, for a certain portion of the day, during which the faithful are free to come and go as they please, in order to pay their adoration to Our Divine Lord. But there are always persons officially appointed to watch and pray in turn, at fixed hours, before the Blessed Sacrament, that It may never be without a guard of honour. If these are of the female sex, they kneel outside the sanctuary rails, while male watchers may enter the sanctuary vested in cassock and surplice. Those who have some leisure hours will generally do a service to the clergy in charge by volunteering for the office of "watcher," which, indeed, they should regard as a very high privilege. To act as a lord or lady "in waiting" to an earthly potentate is as nothing compared to attendance on the Divine King of kings in His Sacrament of love.

Devotion of the "Forty Hours."

Exposition, subject to the Bishop's consent, may be held at any time of the year. In the convents of several religious congregations it is exposed daily—in some of them during the night as well—for adoration by the religious in turn. But the more solemn occasion for the general laity is the Devotion of the "Forty Hours," or, to give the original Italian title and equivalent, the "Quarant' Ore." The Blessed Sacrament is exposed after a solemn Mass, solemnly carried in procession through the midst of the congregation, and then left upon the Altar-throne, day and night, for about forty hours. The devotions close after another solemn Mass on the third day, followed by procession and Benediction. In places where it is impossible to secure male watchers for the two nights involved, a modified ceremonial is sometimes allowed according to which the Sacred Host is exposed only during

the day hours, and the devotions close temporarily each evening, with Benediction, and finally on the *evening* of the third day, instead of in the morning. "Public" Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, at which the congregation assembles for devotions, are commonly held during the day, over and above the private ones made by individuals at choice.

Origin of the devotion.

The Forty Hours' Devotion owes its origin to the initiative of a Capuchin Friar of Milan, Joseph de Fermo, who in 1537 introduced the practice of adoring the Blessed Sacrament during a part of three days, in memory of the time during which Our Lord's Body lay in the tomb. Clement VIII. formally established the practice, ordering it to be carried out in rotation by all the churches in Rome, and granting Indulgences. The usage soon spread to other cities and countries, and Leo XIII. (Dec. 8, 1897) extended the Indulgences to the whole world. Pius VII. had previously declared all the Altars in a church to be "privileged" during the time of the Devotions (May 10, 1807).[1]

At the "Altar of Repose."

For completeness, reference may here be made to the "watching" before the Blessed Sacrament from the end of the morning ceremony of Maundy Thursday till the "Mass of the Pre-sanctified," on Good Friday morning, at what is called the "Altar of Repose." This is not really Exposition, for the Sacred Host is not *exposed* on the Altar, but lies inside a chalice, within the closed Tabernacle, where it was deposited at the end of the procession on Maundy Thursday.[2]

[1] See "Privileged Altar," p. 226.

[2] See *Leaflets*, "Explanation of the Ceremonies of Holy Week." English Catholic Truth Society. Also: "Lent and Holy Week," by H. Thurston, S. J.

The Stations of the Cross
or
Way of the Cross.
(*Via Crucis.*)

Pope Benedict XIV., speaking of various devotions in honour of the Sacred Passion and Death of Christ, considers the Stations of the Cross one of the most efficacious for converting sinners, instilling fervour into the tepid, and advancing the good in holiness.

Certainly this devotion contributed largely towards building up the heroic sanctity of St. Joseph Benedict Labré, canonized by Leo XIII., Dec. 8, 1881.

Origin.

St. Leonard of Port Maurice, of the Order of the Franciscan Friars Minor, who had been healed through the intercession of Our Lady after vowing to devote himself to missionary work, practised the devotion of the Stations constantly, and propagated it wherever he preached. He established, moreover, a special confraternity for performing the Stations processionally, and the form he arranged has, in substance, become universally adopted.

Meaning of the practice.

The meaning of the practice is evident. It is an imitation of a pilgrimage to those Holy Places in Palestine which were the scenes of Our Lord's final sufferings, Crucifixion, and Burial. It sprang, under the influence of grace, from a pious wish, on the part of those impeded from actually visiting the Holy Land, to follow in spirit the blood-stained footprints of the Man of Sorrows along the dolorous way from the judgment-seat of Pilate to the hill of Calvary and to the tomb. The reader of history pores with interest over each incident of some great and fateful military

campaign, and follows, for example, the final struggle between Europe and Napoleon in all its incidents, from the ballroom in Brussels to the bloody fields of Quatre-Bras and Waterloo. Yet how much more eagerly and lovingly should not the redeemed soul dwell upon the far more momentous duel between Death and Life fought by the King of Heaven in behalf of those oppressed by the Devil, even to the shedding of His life-blood on Golgotha to its very last drop!

Rich Indulgences.

To encourage the faithful in so fruitful a devotion, the touching simplicity of which seems to appeal with special eloquence to the struggling poor of Christ, the Holy See has heaped upon those who follow with a devout mind the different stages of Our Saviour's painful journey to Calvary the same wealth of Indulgences which may be acquired by pilgrims contemplating them upon the actual spot in Palestine.

Some technical points.

It is unnecessary to give here all the details as to faculties and form for canonical erection of Stations in a church, chapel, cemetery, or elsewhere. These chiefly concern priests. But the following items may be of use to all.

1. The power of erecting the Stations is reserved by the Holy See to the Superiors General of the Franciscan First Order,[1] whether Conventuals, or of the Reform.

2. The Stations, or incidents of Our Lord's journey reviewed in turn, are *fourteen* in number, beginning with Christ's unjust condemnation by Pilate, and ending with His burial in the rocky tomb near Calvary under the care of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. The greater number

[1] The Franciscans are composed of three Orders: The "First" consists of males, of whatever branch; the "Second" of nuns, in several varieties; and the "Third" of women living under obedience in convents, and of laity of both sexes—single or married—living according to a fixed rule, and usually called "Tertiaries."

are taken from the Gospels : the rest either come down to us by tradition, or are intelligent deductions made by the contemplative soul from the facts actually recorded. The incidents are usually represented in paintings, or sculpture, or carvings, and surmounting each representation, is a wooden Cross. Now, contrary to what might be supposed, it is the *Cross*, and not the representation, which is the essential part of each Station. The Indulgences are attached to the Crosses so that the pictures may be changed, or done away with, without any loss of Indulgences. The Crosses, however, may also be renewed without loss of Indulgences, but under similar restrictions to those mentioned in regard to the renewal of beads.[1]

Conditions for Indulgences.

3. *For Gaining the Indulgences*—(*a*) As regards meditation, it is only *necessary* to meditate according to one's capacity on "the Passion of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ" :[2] and not essential to ponder the particular incident belonging to each Station. St. Leonard of Port Maurice, in his explanation, himself replies, on this point, that one may meditate on one and the same mystery throughout the exercise. Still, it is evidently more in keeping with the idea of the devotion to ponder each Station in turn. The people need not leave their places nor walk after the priest, but may follow the devotion from their places. It is enough that the priest move along the Stations for them. It is good and usual for the congregation to turn bodily in their places towards the Station where the priest is standing. But this is not essential. So that an organist, for instance, who has to be ready to accompany the singing, may remain seated at the organ all through, without losing the Indulgences.

[1] See p. 234.
[2] *Raccolta* (English edition, 1909, p. 92).

4. It is the common practice to add one "Our Father," a "Hail Mary," and an Act of Contrition for sin, to the brief contemplation of each Station. But this, again, is optional as far as the gaining of Indulgences is concerned. The Act of Contrition is, nevertheless, extremely to be recommended.

Interruptions.

5. A person making the Stations privately (which should always be *out of service-time*) and wishing to secure the Indulgences, may not make them by instalments. This, however, is not to be taken so literally as to forbid a slight *interruption*, for whatever reason. The break—as Beringer states—may even be of considerable length, provided the cause be not mere *secular* occupations. Thus — to quote the author's example—a person may break off in order to go to Confession, hear Mass, and receive Holy Communion, without being obliged to begin the Stations afresh for gaining the Indulgences.[1]

It would seem to follow from this that a considerable interruption caused, for instance, by having to attend charitably to some person taken suddenly ill in the church would stand on the same footing. Charity is always privileged in the eyes of the Church.

Plenary Indulgences.

6. The Indulgences for the Stations comprise several Plenary as well as Partial ones. Yet, in this case, the "usual conditions"—Confession, Communion, and prayer for the Pope's intentions, are *not* needed. It is sufficient to be *contrite* for one's sins. For this reason, it is well to make a fervent Act of Contrition *before starting* the devotion.

[1] Beringer, vol. i., pp. 395-396. It is well to fight against any feeling of human respect which would prevent one from performing the Stations privately in a public church, as though it were "showing off."

Of course, one can only gain one (whole) Plenary Indulgence for oneself: the rest can, however, benefit the souls in Purgatory. But it is different with Partial Indulgences. Hence, if the Stations be performed more than once in the day, the Partial Indulgences attached may be gained *on each occasion*, according to a rule to be mentioned in the next chapter.[1]

[1] Pp. 223-224.

CHAPTER XVI

INDULGENCES

"Indulgences being so excellent a good that I find myself unable to praise and extol them according to their deserts, all I can do is to beg and entreat you, by the love and reverence you owe to God, that you hold them in highest esteem, and devote yourselves to benefiting by them with all the care of which you are capable" (St. Ignatius de Loyola to the inhabitants of Azpeitia, in 1540).—*Letters of St. Ignatius*, I. 92.

THE word "Indulgence" suggests the notion of an act of mercy or leniency, and this is, in fact, the right idea of this exercise on the part of the Church, of that power of "binding and loosing" which, as we know from the Scriptures, Our Lord granted to the rulers of His Church, and in an especial manner and degree to Cephas, or Peter, the bearer of "the keys of the kingdom of Heaven."[1]

Principles.

To understand the principle of Indulgences, we must return to one or two theological principles already mentioned in our first Chapter. Sin contains two distinct elements: Its *guilt* in God's eyes, and the *punishment* due to it from Divine justice. This is the twofold *chain* of sin to be "loosened." The sin—supposing it to be *mortal*—robs the offender's soul of God's love and friendship, and merits eternal Hell for its punishment. When we repent of it, we are restored to God's friendship through recovered grace, and escape *eternal* punishment, at all events. But

[1] Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18.

our repentance may not be—probably is not as a rule—of such a perfect *quality* as to cancel all *temporal* punishment—to be undergone either during life, or after death, in Purgatory, before we can be admitted to the endless joys of Heaven.

Indulgences cancel *punishment*, not *guilt*.

Now, the important point to notice here is this : an Indulgence can have no mitigating effect whatever upon the *guilt* of sin (nor on its *eternal* punishment). It cannot remove the guilt of the smallest *venial* sin, even. Ten thousand Indulgences could not. Only *sincere repentance* can do this. It is only *after the guilt has been removed by repentance* that an Indulgence can work its effect, which is to cancel the debt of *temporal* punishment still remaining due. Indulgences, then, bear *solely* upon the *punishment*, and not at all upon the *guilt*.

They merely cancel the *temporal punishment* which often remains due to Divine Holiness and Justice after the *guilt* has been wiped out by the only means possible—viz., *sincere repentance*. An Indulgence pays off some, or all, of this debt of satisfaction in the case of those who repent.

Objection : God defrauded.

But, it may be objected, does not an Indulgence defraud Almighty God of the full reparation due to His Divine Majesty ? How can the recital, for instance, of a short Indulgenced prayer, like the Angelus, be an efficient substitute for suffering in this world, or for the acuter suffering of Purgatory ? The answer is that, nevertheless, the Justice of God is truly satisfied, and His honour truly repaired, by an Indulgence, notwithstanding the leniency of this form of reparation. To understand this, we must go back to our thoughts upon the relation existing between the Church and her Divine Founder. The Church, as we saw from St. Paul, is the spiritual Spouse of Jesus Christ, the Mother of us, who are His children and hers. Our Lord, on withdrawing

His visible presence from this earth, left her to provide for the needs and miseries of His human family, and, for this purpose, bequeathed to her the riches of His all-atoning merits. These are ever *perfectly* acceptable and satisfactory to the Father. And these inexhaustible riches—together with the supplementary, non-essential, merits of our Lady and of the Saints—constitute what is called the "Treasury" of the Church; and, in granting Indulgences, the Church draws from this treasury the means for paying the debts of temporary punishment owed by her erring children to the Justice of God. Or, to use a homely comparison, Mother Church indulgently pays out of her Spouse's infinite merits the fines of temporal punishment, and so saves us from being consigned after death to that debtor's prison of the King, whence none departs till the last farthing has been paid.

Two kinds of Indulgence.

Indulgences are either "Partial" or "Plenary" (or full)—that is to say, the Church may disburse from the treasury enough to pay off a *limited portion* or *part* of our debts of punishment, or else sufficient to pay off *the whole* of them, as they stand at the time of gaining the Indulgence. Thus, a person who gains a *Plenary* Indulgence would, if death took him there and then, pass straight from the Private Judgment to Heaven, without passing through Purgatory. For, on the one hand, he must have died in the state of grace, since no one can gain an Indulgence, at least for himself, unless he be in grace—either through having made a good Confession, or being contrite for his sins. The *guilt*, therefore, had been already removed, and the Plenary Indulgence did the rest. Both these chains of sin, holding the soul back from entering the gates of Heaven, being removed—that is, the guilt, by repentance, and the punishment, by the Plenary Indulgence—

the soul is perfectly freed, and flies upward straight to the bosom of God.

Error to be avoided.

We have seen that the temporal punishment due to sin, after its guilt has been remitted, must be undergone either in Purgatory, or in the form of *earthly suffering*, except Indulgences intervene. It would be an error, however, to suppose that Indulgences will, or are meant to, relieve us of all suffering in this world. Such an idea would imply that God can have no purpose consistent with His Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness, for sending, or permitting, temporal afflictions except as a chastisement for our sins. It is this mistake which underlies the sufferer's plaint: "What have I done, or what has my dear one done, to deserve such suffering!" Apart from the possibility—to say no more—that God may see very much in us to chastise that escapes the slovenly search of our self-love or our blind partiality for those whom we love, there are many other assignable reasons, such as to test our patience and fidelity, to wean our hearts from the things of earth, and lead us to the practice of more frequent prayer and to other virtues in which we are wanting. The Church does not oppose those designs of Providence. In granting Indulgences she contemplates the remission of temporal pains, but only in as far as these are intended as a means for expiating our sins. She has never wished to free us from such sufferings as are needed for conquering our evil habits, or for helping us to lead a holier Christian life.[1]

Teaching of St. Thomas.

This is, in fact, the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas: "An Indulgence," he writes, "takes the place of satisfaction inasmuch as it serves as a *punishment* . . . but does not replace it in as far as it is a *medicine*."[2]

The principle underlying Partial Indulgences

[1] See Beringer, *op. cit.*, p. 23. [2] *Quodlib.*, ii., q. 8, art. 16.

"Days" of Indulgence.

needs a little explanation. What is the meaning of an Indulgence of 50, or 100, or 300 days? Does it mean that the person gaining it escapes the same number of days of Purgatory? No, it does not. In the first place, seeing that earthly measurement of time ceases with death, it would not be so easy to say what a "day" of Purgatory represented. No. To understand the present point, we must recall the system of Canonical Penances in vogue during the earlier centuries of Christianity. There were fixed terms of severe penitential exercises alloted to given sins, which were eagerly embraced by those fervent Christians —either before, or after, they had received Sacramental Absolution.[1] Let us suppose one of these early Christians with a penance lasting fifty days. Well, the Catholic of to-day in gaining a fifty days' Indulgence, atones to God's Justice to the same extent as that early Christian did. When one considers the severity and length of those primitive penances, it becomes easy to realize how well chosen is the name "Indulgence."[2] When we go to Confession, the priest indeed enjoins a penance. That is part of the Sacrament. But how utterly insignificant our modern penances appear when compared to the long fasts and humiliations so readily undergone in the beginning of the Church for the same kinds of sins as men still commit to-day! And although our sacramental penances derive from Christ's merits contained in the Sacrament a virtue of satisfaction far in excess of what one may call their *face value*,

[1] Besides the *canonical* penances there was also a fixed code of *public* penances, assigned to *public* crimes of a scandalous nature.

[2] Some Indulgences, it will be noticed, are granted in "quarantines." In early times the "quarantine" was a period of forty days, during which *specially severe* penance was performed. Hence this class of Partial Indulgences has a greater satisfactory value.

yet it can hardly be doubted that in the case of very many penitents a heavy debt of satisfaction must still remain due. This debt—never extinguished by mere lapse of time—must be paid to the last farthing, for God is immutably just. So, we must needs work it off, either by suffering in life, or in Purgatory after death, except we do adequate voluntary penance, *or* avail ourselves of the numerous Indulgences granted by the Church's liberality.

A Protestant objection.

Non-Catholics commonly regard the system of Indulgences as an encouragement to lax living. Those—say they—who can at so little cost to their own skins escape the penal consequences of their misdeeds are not likely to scruple much about perpetrating them. I am here supposing an objector who has got beyond the ignorant and absurd conception of Catholic Indulgences alluded to in my earliest chapter, and who understands them as we do. Even so, the theory that they foster laxity is purely fictitious. In practice, priests do not find much zeal for gaining Indulgences among the laxer members of their flocks. It is generally the more earnest Catholic who is most conspicuous for coveting these spiritual favours. The reason is not far to seek. Indulgences—as we have seen—can only be gained (at all events for *themselves*) by those who are in the state of grace ; and if they have been guilty of grave sin, grace can only be recovered by *real sorrow* and *sincere purpose of amendment for the future*. So that the prospect of an Indulgence tends to promote *repentance* rather than laxity. And should it be further urged that this purpose of amendment is often followed by an early relapse, yet—clearly—the effort previously made to dispose oneself for pardon and for gaining the Indulgence cannot but act at least as a *check* upon misdoing. From a Catholic point of view, if this

temporary *break* in sinful habits do but diminish the number of mortal sins committed by *one*, this of itself is an incalculable gain. It is a gain, however, which will hardly be duly valued by those who fail to appreciate the untold evil of a mortal offence against the Majesty and Holiness of God as Catholic theology appreciates it. The spiritual effort to keep the conscience substantially clean, so as to be capable of Indulgences, is in itself a valuable aid in the struggle after better things. It was perhaps in this sense that St. Ignatius said: "For those who strive after the love of God and Heaven, Indulgences are a rich treasure and a precious jewel."

Conditions for Gaining Indulgences.

To gain any Indulgence the following conditions are required:

Detailed knowledge not needed.

1. *The Intention of gaining it.*—Without this the act would not be that of a responsible human being. But the question arises: How far must this intention be explicit and detailed? The point is of practical interest. For, I may not know—I may not have the means of knowing—whether, or what, Indulgences are attached to certain religious acts. Probably few Catholics are exactly informed, for example, of all the Indulgences belonging to Rosaries, Scapulars, or other pious objects possessed by them. Yet they may habitually perform the acts prescribed for gaining the Indulgences. The answer to the above query must differ according to the terms of the grant. Thus, if a Partial Indulgence is granted—*e.g.*, for the devout recital of five "Our Fathers" and five "Hail Marys" *in honour of Our Lord's Five Wounds*—clearly I must somehow direct my intention to the object assigned. Otherwise, the thing prescribed is not done *as* prescribed. But still

it is not necessary for me to *know* the precise object fixed, provided I know that there is one, and mean to say the prayers according to it. The same applies, as we shall see, to prayers for the Pope's Intentions.

A "virtual" intention.

In the case of Indulgences in which no particular intention is allotted to the prayers prescribed, it is enough that I maintain within me a constant general intention of gaining all the Indulgences that may happen to attach to the religious acts which I perform. In order to make sure of keeping up this "virtual" intention, as it is called, I should every morning—*e.g.*, at my morning prayers—make an *express* intention of gaining whatever good things of the kind are going. Of course, the acts appointed must actually be accomplished, though I am not obliged to know in detail what the Indulgences belonging to them are, nor that any Indulgences are attached at all. According to what we are going to see in the next section, the moral is to keep ourselves constantly free from *mortal* sin, so that we may get the benefit of any Indulgences that are to be had.

2. *The State of Grace.*—That is to say, I must be free from the guilt of *mortal* sin. This guilt may be removed previous to Confession by an Act of Perfect Contrition, but still more surely by seeking Absolution.

A disputed point.

There is a difference of opinion among Catholic theologians as to whether a person in mortal sin can gain Indulgences at all events for the souls of the faithful departed: he cannot, of course, gain them for his *own* benefit. The Church has not pronounced authoritatively upon the point. There are, however, good theological authorities for an affirmative reply. But as their opinion is only probable, it is wiser—in the matter-of-fact question of Indulgences—to act as if they were

wrong, and to take an early opportunity for recovering the grace of God, in order to be able more securely to relieve the suffering and helpless souls in Purgatory.

Exact fulfilment of terms.

3. *Performance of the Works prescribed.*—The things prescribed must be *done*, and, moreover, done *in the way* prescribed. The prayers, religious acts, or good works enriched with Indulgences must be carried out precisely under the conditions stated in the grant. N.B.—This point is vital. Indulgences are *favours*, accorded upon definite terms. Unless these terms are exactly complied with, we can have no confidence of having obtained the benefit. Good faith, or ignorance, will not avail us. So it is well to inform ourselves as to the exact conditions laid down by the Church.[1]

Terms for Plenary Indulgence.

As regards *Plenary* Indulgences, several points are to be noted. Usually, the conditions for a Plenary Indulgence are the following, except that the *fourth* one mentioned below is not *always* required :

1. Confession. 2. Communion. 3. Prayers for the Pope's Intentions. 4. In some cases the Prayers must be said during a *Visit* to a church, or to some *particular* church. A few words about these conditions.

Order in supplying conditions.

These four conditions—unless the grant expressly state the contrary—may be performed in any order the person prefers. Confession will naturally precede Communion, and—should clear mortal sin have been committed since the last Confession—it *must* precede. But the prayers for the Pope's Intentions and the Visit (when prescribed) may be fulfilled either before or after receiving the Sacraments. The grant is some-

[1] *The Raccolta* is a book of the highest authority for all information as to the conditions for Indulgences. It can be had in English at Burns Oates and Washbourne's depôts.

times expressed thus, "Those who, being truly penitent, and having confessed and communicated, shall visit a church," etc. . . . But Beringer cites a decree for his statement that the above form does *not* mean that the Sacraments must necessarily be received first, but that it *does* mean that the last-mentioned work must be performed in the *state of grace*—a disposition for the Visit not *necessarily* involving *previous* Confession.[1]

Explanations.

The Confession may be made within the eight days preceding the feast; the Communion on the eve, and both within the octave.

Several Plenaries (*a*) *same* day.

Sometimes two or more "Plenaries" are obtainable on the same day—*e.g.*, through its being one Indulgenced for all the faithful, and also separately for members of certain confraternities, etc. The Communion, of course, *cannot* be repeated for each Indulgence, nor, morally speaking, can the Confession. But the Prayers, Visit, or other works enjoined can, and *must be* repeated for each Indulgence that the person desires to pray for.

(*b*) On *different* days.

But there is a different case—namely, when various Plenaries occur on *different* days, but at very brief intervals, or on successive days. In this case, the *Communion* must be repeated on each of the Indulgenced days. As regards Confession, that depends. For those *who are in the habit of confessing twice a month*, that *one* Confession suffices for any number of Plenary Indulgences that chance to occur. A special privilege, however, in this matter has been granted by the Code (Can. 931, § 3) to such as practise *Daily* Communion (even if they should miss Communion once or twice *in the week*), by which

[1] Beringer, vol. i., p. 89.

they are exempted from the obligation of Confession.[1]

Nature of Papal "Intentions."

Prayer for the Pope's Intentions.—These Intentions are: The extension and triumph of the Catholic Faith, Peace among Christian Princes, Extirpation of Heresies (not of the *persons* deceived by them), the Conversion of Sinners, and for the general needs of the Church.

It is not necessary that a person should *know* these intentions in *detail*; it is enough to mean to pray for whatever they are.

Amount of prayer.

The prayer must be something more than a very brief one—such as one "Hail Mary" would be. Five "Our Fathers" and five "Hail Marys" may be taken as a sample of sufficient *length*. But any other prayers will do, provided that they be at least partly *vocal* and not wholly mental.[2]

Prayers already commanded.

Prayers which a person is already bound to say (under pain of sin) will not serve for the Indulgence—*e.g.*, the Divine Office (or prayers into which Office has been commuted), in the case of one in Sacred Orders. Nevertheless, prayers (if of sufficient length) imposed as a "penance" in Confession do not fall under this restriction.[3]

Prayers of Rule.

Devotions and virtuous acts prescribed in such Religious Rules *as do not of themselves bind under pain of sin*, may be used for gaining the Indulgences—*e.g.*, chanting Office, Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, extra fasts of rule, etc. . . .

As already stated, the prayers and works enjoined must be repeated for *each* Plenary Indulgence.

The Visit.—In the case of some Plenary Indulgences, a Visit to a church is prescribed, besides Prayers for the Pope's Intentions. Some grants

[1] The indulgences attached to Jubilees, whether ordinary or extraordinary, are not included in this concession (Can. 931, § 3).

[2] Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, June 14, 1901.

[3] *Ibid.*, Sept. 13, 1888.

expressly state that the Prayers are to be said *during* the Visit. In any case, there is no *objection* to this combination. Some points need to be noticed concerning the *place* and *time* of the Visit. The terms of the grant must be carefully observed.

Place. If the grant say "to *a* church," and no more, then *any* church or chapel, except a Private Oratory (granted for the benefit of a private individual or his family) will suffice—*e.g.*, the domestic chapel of a Religious community, whether there be direct access to it from the road or not.

If, on the contrary, the grant say "to a *public* church or chapel," it will not do to visit the chapel of a religious house, in spite of the fact that such chapels—being "semi-public"—avail the faithful for *validly* fulfilling the duty of Sunday Mass. In the present instance, the place of worship visited must be one approved by the Bishop for the general use of the faithful.[1]

Sometimes the Visit is to be made in "the *parish* church," or in some other particular church named. If so, none other will serve.

Presence in Church. Actual *entry inside the church* is *not* essential. It would be enough to worship God, or pay devotions to the Saints, standing in the porch, or

[1] But in virtue of recent legislation (Decree of the Holy Office, Jan. 14, 1909), a chapel where the precept of Mass can be fulfilled is available for the Visit in the case of those *living in the house*, provided they belong to one of the classes named in the decree—namely, "faithful of either sex," who, with episcopal approval, live together in common, for the pursuit of perfection, for training, education, or even for reasons of health, and also those who dwell in the house for ministering to the needs of its inmates. It is plain, therefore, that Religious, their boarders and household, servants and resident staff, are included in the above privilege. This decree will only serve when the Visit is prescribed to be made to "*a* church" or *a* public chapel—indefinitely, and not when a *particular* church is indicated, such as "the *parish* church," or some individual place of worship.

behind a closed grille at the entrance, or even outside joined to a crowd of worshippers, when prevented from entering. In short, conditions under which one can validly hear Mass said in the church will suffice for the Visit.

Intention of worship.

Mere bodily presence will not suffice. One must have the *intention of worshipping*, and not merely attend out of curiosity. There is *no obligation to kneel* during the Prayers for the Pope, or the Visit.

Any confessor has power to change the Visit to some other work, in the case of the aged or sick.

Period for Visit.

The *time* within which the Prayers or Visit must be performed—unless expressly stated otherwise—is between midnight and midnight of the day for which the Indulgence is given.[1] We have previously mentioned that when an Indulgence is granted for a particular feast, the *Confession* and *Communion* may be made on the previous day. But unless the grant allow the Prayers and Visit to be made in the afternoon of the eve, they cannot be thus anticipated. When, therefore, *Sacraments* are received on the eve, the person's freedom as to the *order* in which he fulfils the various conditions for the Indulgence—referred to above—becomes partially modified.

It is not necessary to go to church for the Visit on a *distinct occasion*. This is important for those who can only manage to go to church once in the day. But, to make surer of the Indulgences, assistance at Holy Mass *of obligation* had better not be counted for the Visit : it is safer to make the Visit just before Mass begins, or after its close. As thanksgiving after Com-

[1] The New Codex of Canon Law, Canon 923, fixes as the period for the Visit, in the case of *all* Indulgences requiring a Visit, from noon of the eve till the midnight closing the feast-day itself (second edition).

munion may extend beyond the time of Mass, and is not regulated by any precept, there appears no reason why this time should not count for the Visit.

Exact fulfilment.

We have more than once insisted on the need to follow the terms of the Indulgence *grant* very exactly. Yet this must not be interpreted with unreasonable rigour. Thus an omission in the works enjoined, if *very* small, relatively to the whole, need not be considered to destroy the Indulgence—*e.g.*, missing out one or two "Hail Marys" in the recital of five decades of the Rosary. On the other side, a Plenary Indulgence would certainly be lost if one of the three (or four) conditions were wholly left out.

Frequency with which Indulgences may be gained.—One and the same grant of a Plenary Indulgence cannot, as a rule, avail us more than *once a day*.

The "Portiuncula."

The Indulgence of the Portiuncula (Aug. 2) forms a well-known exception to this rule. Given Confession and Communion, a Plenary Indulgence may be gained *as often as* a visit is made during the feast to any Franciscan Church, or to any church to which the Portiuncula privilege has been conceded, and prayers are offered there for the Pope's Intentions. This Indulgence was, at first, granted only to the members of the Franciscan Order, and was attached exclusively to the church of Santa Maria dei Angeli (St. Mary of the Angels), near the town of Assisi—a shrine whose abandoned and desolate state charmed the soul of that poverty-loving client of Mary, St. Francis. It was afterwards extended to all Franciscan churches throughout the world, and not only to the First Order (Men), but also to the Second Order (Nuns), and even to the Third Order, if living in community under religious

vows. The Portiuncula used to be exceptional in that the Visits may begin from noon of Aug. 1 and continue till midnight closing Aug. 2. See, however, footnote, p. 220.

Carmelite privilege.

A similar privilege, for benefiting many times a day by the same grant of a Plenary Indulgence, is offered to all the faithful who make separate visits to any *Carmelite* church on July 16, the feast of the Carmelite Reformer, St. Teresa (or on the Sunday following her feast), and also to all who make visits to a *Servite* church on the Feast of the Seven Dolours (third Sunday in September). Even in these cases, according to Canon 923, the visits may be made during the twenty-four hours of the feast-day itself, or on the eve. As in the Indulgence of the "Portiuncula," so in these two instances, Confession, Communion, and prayer for the Pope's Intentions are required.

Chapels of the Rosary.

Again, on the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary, a similar privilege is attached to any Chapel specially dedicated to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary (or a statue of the same publicly exposed outside the said chapel) *in a church where the Confraternity of the Rosary has been canonically established.* Those who have been to Confession and Communion may gain a Plenary Indulgence *each time* they visit such a chapel (or statue) and there pray for the Pope's Intentions. The *Confession,* in this case, may be made any time within eight days immediately preceding the feast. The time during which the Indulgence may be gained begins in the afternoon (First Vespers) on the eve of the feast.

Why try for several Indulgences?

We may here consider a *difficulty.* Of what use—it may be asked—is the repeated endeavour to gain Plenary Indulgences on the same day? For, a Plenary Indulgence, being the *full* remission of *all* temporal punishment due to a

person's sins, what can he want with more than one? He cannot gain more than one. Once *all* debts are paid, nothing remains for the Indulgence to work upon.

Nevertheless, there is every use in the proceeding. For if the extra Indulgences are not needed by the person trying for them, is there not many a poor soul in Purgatory who will be thankful for all eternity to him who gives even out of his superfluities? Reason for.

A very common impression seems to exist among Catholics that one Plenary remission of temporal punishment (for *themselves*) may be made up out of two or more Plenary Indulgences tried for, but not fully gained, owing to some defect on their part. In other words, that one Indulgence in its Plenary effect may be obtained by the combination of several *Partial* ones. No doubt it can, generally speaking. But, if the particular defect in question be "affection" for venial sin,[1] theologians hold the person incapable of a full remission of all punishment until that "affection" cease—try as he may. For the "affection" prevents repentance for the venial sin, and hence forgiveness of its guilt; and a *Plenary* Indulgence presupposes the remission of *all* guilt.[2] "Making up" one Plenary.

Frequency of Partial Indulgences.—The number of times that a given Partial Indulgence may be gained in the same day will depend upon the terms of the particular grant in question. When the grant simply states without qualification of any sort that the Indulgence may be obtained by performing certain acts, it may be gained *as often as* the acts are fulfilled—that is, any number of Partial Indulgences.

[1] This "attachment" does not mean the mere *presence* of venial sin on the soul, but a clinging to it and lack of any *real* wish to correct it.

[2] See Nature of Indulgences, p. 246.

times during the day. Sometimes this is expressly stated. If, however, the clause "once a day" or its equivalent be added, the Indulgence is only obtainable once in the twenty-four hours.

Indulgence for the Souls in Purgatory.

The helpless souls.

As our convert knows, we can help the souls in Purgatory to pay the debts of satisfaction to God's Justice which they incurred in life and had not cleared off by the time of their departure from it. These souls cannot do anything of themselves to escape from any portion of the Purgation which they need in order to be fitted to appear before the Holy Face of God in Heaven. All they can do is to simply *expiate to the full* those minor faults. But in virtue of the "Communion of Saints," uniting in one family the Church Militant on earth, the Church Suffering in Purgatory, and the Church Triumphant in Heaven, we are happily allowed to do for them what they cannot do for themselves.

Many a Protestant recoils from the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, with its prospect of yet *further* suffering, besides sickness and death, before the perfect peace and bliss of our Father's Home can be obtained. He fails to reflect that there are obviously numbers of imperfect souls which —but for this merciful chance of Purgation afforded them—could never conceivably stand in the Holy Presence of Him before Whom, "the heavens are not clean." Neither does he realize the folly of settling religious beliefs by individual preferences. Man's likes or dislikes can never affect questions of fact and truth. This obvious truism applies yet more to the Catholic doctrine of Eternal Punishment. But apart from such weighty considerations, the doctrine of the Church concerning Purgatory has its compensation.

It does not—like many religions do—set up an insurmountable and pitiless barrier between living mourners and their beloved dead, or cut off all charitable intercourse. If the illness and approach of death somewhat blunted sorrow by the scope it afforded for loving services and attentions, death itself opens up to the Catholic believer an immense new field for affectionate offices. And these are all the more valued by their loved objects because they hasten on their souls' *eternal* happiness, and do not merely delay or mitigate the inevitable ruin of the body. Here, once more, the Catholic Church proves her genius for sympathy with all the lawful instincts of human nature, and satisfies, while also purifying, that natural craving of each bereaved heart to be *doing something* for the dear one whom death would fain have placed beyond its reach. O truly blessed "Communion of Saints."

Means of succour.

There are many ways of charitably helping the dead. Every supernatural act that we perform—say, resistance to the smallest temptation, or the smallest act of virtue—has, amongst other properties, a "satisfactory" value in God's sight which we can transfer to their credit. This is distinct from its *intercessory* power, which we can also dispose of, and from its *merit*—which must remain inalienably our own. Then there is, above all, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, offered for the dead as well as the living, the chief means for appeasing the Divine Justice through Jesus Christ. Besides, there are many Indulgences which we may unselfishly gain for the dead instead of using them for ourselves.[1]

[1] Some make over all the satisfactions coming from themselves or from others in life or after death to the souls in Purgatory, by one act of surrender, which is called "The Heroic Act" (of charity). But it *can* be revoked, as Rome has decided in recent years.

We can offer up our ordinary *satisfactions* for the *living*,

All Indulgences granted by the Church, unless the opposite be expressly stated, are "applicable to the Holy Souls." So few are not, that we need not trouble about them.

The "Privileged Altar."

There is an exceptional kind of Indulgence capable of being applied to the dead which deserves special attention, and needs some little explanation. It is called the "Privileged Altar." A large inscription may be noticed in many churches over the high (principal) Altar: "Altare Privilegiatum." This means that, in virtue of a Papal grant, any Mass said at that Altar carries with it a Plenary Indulgence for the soul for whom the Sacrifice is offered. Now, we have seen that a Plenary Indulgence, when gained, does away with *all* the debt of temporal punishment due to him who benefits by it. Hence, when a Mass, offered at one of these "Privileged" Altars, is accepted by God according to the intention of the priest, it follows that the soul benefited is at once released from Purgatory and admitted to Heaven.

But someone may ask: How far is the intended application of this Indulgence infallible? What certainty is there that the particular soul we have in view will derive the benefit?

It must be admitted that while the *satisfaction offered*—considered according to its intrinsic value in God's eyes—is adequate beyond all question, yet one cannot say with absolute certainty that it will be applied by God as we desire, or at all events applied in its *full measure*. But short of

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also, but we cannot transfer *Indulgences* to them (De Lugo, Suarez). Palmieri gives as a reason that the cancelling of temporal punishment due to us by means of Indulgences is an act of judicial power exercised upon the individual who fulfils the conditions enjoined, and a judicial sentence can only affect the person under judgment. Perhaps as good a reason as any is that the Pope does not now will to give Indulgences to be transferred to the living.

this absolute certainty, there are strong reasons for attributing to the Indulgence of a "Privileged Altar" a far surer application to the soul selected than an ordinary Plenary Indulgence offered on the occasion, for instance, of a Communion made on some indulgenced feast.

Meaning of "suffrages."

One of the explanations of this lack of absolute infallibility lies in the fact that the grant of an Indulgence is an act of jurisdiction exercised by the Church on earth. Now, the Church on earth, though she has direct control and authority over the souls of the faithful during their life, has no direct control over them once they have departed this life, and have fallen *exclusively* under the jurisdiction of God. The expression "suffrages," or "offered by way of suffrage," which we apply to our charitable offices towards the Holy Souls, represents this truth. Hence, the Church does not and cannot apply these Indulgences *direct* to a particular departed soul, but must necessarily offer such satisfactions direct *to God*, begging Him to accept them and to apply them in His mercy according to our intention. At most, therefore, we can say that the *application* which we desire is infallible *subject to the acceptance and good pleasure of God.*

How better than other Plenaries?

In what, then, it may be further urged, is the Plenary Indulgence derived from a "Privileged Altar" better than many another which we may gain and design to the relief of a certain soul? It is certainly far superior for this reason—that the offering of this kind of "Plenary" is associated with the solemn and official pleading of the mystic Bride of Christ, the Church, in her supremest act of Divine worship, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and is thus connected by her with the pleading of the Sacred Heart of the Great High Priest and Victim on the Altar. Consequently, though we cannot be absolutely sure

that God has accepted the Indulgence for the soul selected—at least, in its entirety and so as to free that soul at once from Purgatory—yet we may feel *specially confident* that Jesus Christ has listened to the earnest appeal of His mystical Spouse on earth, and given to her "suffrages" an infallible effect by uniting them to His own sacrificial offering, which *must* be accepted. Moreover, the Sacrifice of the Mass, having atonement for one of its ends, possesses the virtue of removing hindrances to the flow of Divine mercies caused by man's demerits. Thus, it is calculated to clear the way for a sure working of the Indulgence upon the soul pleaded for, which might otherwise have deserved to be excluded from the benefit. Perhaps the person, when in life, sadly overlooked the Christian duty of charity towards the souls in Purgatory, and so would need first to expiate this particular neglect: the Mass offered may be the means of removing this disability.

Rome's explanation.

The exact force of the "Privileged Altar" is concisely set forth in a document of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, July 28, 1840: "The Indulgence of the Privileged Altar, if we view it from the side of him (*i.e.*, the Pope) who grants it, means a Plenary Indulgence such as will at once free a soul entirely from Purgatory. If, on the other hand, we regard the effectiveness of its application, it means an Indulgence the measure of which depends upon the Divine pleasure and acceptance."

A practical conclusion.

The moral is: not to tire of having Masses said, or of assisting at Mass, for our beloved dead. We never know when the moment decreed by God may arrive for letting loose through our instrumentality the plenary flood of the Divine mercy upon these dear suffering souls.

Personal Privilege.

The Privilege here dealt with is sometimes granted to *persons* (priests) as well as to Altars.

For example, the members of the "Priests' Daily Communion League"—for the propagation of Frequent and Daily Communion, in accord with the Decrees of Pius X.—have the benefit of this personal privilege, independently of any particular Altar, on any three days in the week.

There are in existence some Altars "Privileged" for the *living*, but they are comparatively rare, and are not now usually granted.

Particular Indulgences.

We may divide Plenary Indulgences into several classes:

1. Those granted by the Church for certain solemn ecclesiastical *seasons*, or octaves, such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, the Assumption of Our Lady, and All Saints, and obtainable *once* within the stated periods.

These periodic grants vary in different countries, according to the predominance which certain festivals have in the devotion of the peoples concerned.

The following are those *for England and Wales:*

In England and Wales.

From Christmas Day till Epiphany, from the First to the Second Sunday in Lent, from Palm Sunday till Low Sunday (Sunday after Easter Sunday), from Whit Sunday to the octave of Corpus Christi, from the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul to its octave day, from the Sunday preceding the Feast of the Assumption to octave day of the *feast*, from the Sunday preceding the Feast of St. Michael to the following Sunday, from the Sunday preceding All Saints to the octave day of the feast. In each case, the two days mentioned as limits are both included in the time allowed. In the case of the last *three* feasts named, should the feast fall on a Sunday, the period for gaining the Indulgence ends on the following Sunday.

The conditions for gaining the above Indulgences, and *all* Plenary Indulgences (unless the grant also expressly require a Visit) are: Confession, Communion, and Prayers for the Pope's Intentions.

Scotland. *For Scotland:* The same as for England, with the *addition* of the feast of St. Andrew (Nov. 30).

Ireland. *For Ireland:* Plenary Indulgences may be gained on the following feasts (or their eves): The Circumcision (Jan. 1), the Epiphany (Jan. 6), the Annunciation of Our Lady (Mar. 25), the Assumption of Our Lady (Aug. 15), the Nativity of Our Lady (Sept. 8) or the Sunday following, the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8) or the Sunday following, Easter Sunday, Ascension Day, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, Trinity Sunday, or on any of the seven following days; SS. Peter and Paul, or on any of the seven following days; All Saints, Christmas Day, the titular feast of a church. Also, on the First Sunday, and First Friday, of the month a Plenary Indulgence may be gained by those who, after Confession and Communion, meditate for a time upon the infinite goodness of the Sacred Heart. With this exception, the conditions are as usual—*i.e.*, Confession, Communion, and Prayer for the Pope's Intentions.

North America. *For the United States:* There appears to be no difference of *universal* application in the case of the States from what is granted for England.

On the feast *or its eve.* N.B.—We may repeat here that in the case of all the above, and of any other Indulgences granted for feast days, it is always lawful to make the Confession and Communion *on the eve* of the feast[1]; but any additional works that are prescribed—*e.g.*, Prayer for the Pope's Intentions—must always be performed *on the day itself*—that is, between midnight and midnight—unless expressly stated to the contrary.[2]

[1] Also, Confession within eight days preceding the feast, and Confession and Communion within the octave.

[2] But see p. 220, note.

ERRATUM.

Holy-Days of Obligation for Scotland.

The text should read:

In Scotland.—The same as in England, *with the addition* of the Feasts of the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8) and of St. Joseph (Mar. 19). St. Andrew's Feast is *not* a Holy-day.

2. Plenary Indulgences granted for a particular feast, not for a season or period—*e.g.*, for the Circumcision (Jan. 1), for many feasts of our Lady, Corpus Christi, etc. The N.B. just given above applies to these also. These vary considerably in different countries, but are usually announced in public by the clergy.

3. Plenary Indulgences attached to pious objects or to confraternities and pious associations ; also, for the performance daily (or so many times a week) of some devotion, and obtainable *once in a month*, on any day the person may choose. To these may be added the Plenary Indulgence connected with the Last Blessing, at the hour of death.

4. A Plenary Indulgence may be gained whenever a person, after Confession and Communion, recites the prayer *En Ego* ("O good and sweetest Jesus") before a representation of Christ crucified, *and also* prays for the Pope's Intentions.

CHAPTER XVII

SACRAMENTALS CONTINUED: PIOUS OBJECTS

We have already seen that there is a difference between an object simply *blessed* and one that is also *indulgenced*. In this, and succeeding chapters, we shall deal with pious objects from the point of view of Indulgences, and not from that of simple blessing.

Materials Allowed.

There are objects capable of being blessed which it is not the practice to indulgence. Even things not of a religious character are sometimes blessed—*e.g.*, houses, ships, cattle, etc. But no Indulgences are attached to such. Further, there are rules restricting the kind of material to be used in making a sacred object if it is to be indulgenced. Thus, Indulgences are not to be attached to things made out of very perishable, flexible, or fragile stuff—such as crucifixes, statuettes, medals, etc., of tin, lead, blown glass, plaster, and similar substances. As regards rosaries, however, the *beads* forming them *may* be made of tin, lead, solid glass, or wood (which list is suitable also for other pious objects). For beads of their nature involve greater solidity of make. So, too, Indulgences are withheld from objects made of paper, card, or textile fabrics. They may nevertheless be given to such materials

as ivory, bone, silver, gold, iron, steel, coral, mother of pearl, yellow amber, enamel, alabaster, marble, and similar substances.

Form of Object.

Objects representing *persons* may only be indulgenced if the latter are *canonized Saints*, or Saints whose names appear in approved martyrologies ; hence those who have so far only been beatified, or declared "Blessed," are excluded. But in the case of an object having two sides—like a medal—any illustrious or worthy personage may appear on one side—*e.g.*, a "blessed," or "venerable," [1] or a Pope, etc., provided a Saint figure on the other side.

Without a very special leave of the Pope, finger-rings or bracelets intended to serve as chaplets, having a decade of nodes, or knobs for beads, cannot receive Indulgences. Papal authority seems to be also needed for indulgencing a *string* of beads consisting of a single decade.

What the Indulgences are Attached to.

In the case of *Crucifixes*, it is the *figure of* Repairs.
Christ which carries the Indulgence ; thus, the *Cross* may be changed for any other material without loss of Indulgences. In a medal, it is the figure of Our Lord, our Lady, of the Saint or Angel, that is indulgenced.

With rosaries, or chaplets, the Indulgences are wedded to the *beads*, and not to the chain or string holding them, nor to the Crucifix, medals, etc., which people may fasten on to them. So

[1] A "venerable" is a deceased holy person whose cause of beatification has been formally introduced into the Roman Courts. A large number of our English martyrs stand at present in this category.

the chain, if broken, or worn out, may be mended or wholly renewed, or the medals changed, without detriment. As regards breakage or loss of the *indulgenced beads* themselves, no harm is done by replacing old beads with new, *provided* the number of the new ones substituted on any single occasion be not in very large proportion—as *half* of the whole number would certainly be. The underlying principle here is that the chaplet must remain *morally the same* chaplet as it was when blessed. Though physically altered by the renewal of some of its component parts, it remains still, humanly speaking, the same. (In the case of *medals*, Indulgences cease when the *indulgenced* figure is so effaced as to be unrecognizable.) Nevertheless, though by dint of successive replacements of old beads by new ones the *whole* chaplet should have been renewed *in course of time*, the Indulgences still survive—in the same way that a human body does not lose its moral identity because, as science tells us, its entire substance is renewed in a certain term of years. The two cases may not be perfectly equal; still, the illustration shows the common sense of the rule above stated.

How Objects Lose Indulgences.

1. By *permanent*[1] loss or destruction of the part of the object carrying the Indulgences. One cannot replace the whole object by a new one, and yet retain the Indulgences. N.B.—*Scapulars*, however, are *excepted* from this forbiddance. Loss.

2. By *essential* change in the material or form beyond what the preceding rules allow. Thus—in respect of *form*—one may not, *e.g.*, make up a Seven Dolours chaplet out of a previously blessed five-decade chaplet of Our Lady, and yet benefit by the old Indulgences, on the plea that the latter were attached to the *beads*. The whole character of the chaplet is changed. Change.

3. *By Exchange or Sale.*—There are repeated declarations of the Holy See forbidding all traffic, or *appearance* of traffic, in chaplets *already indulgenced;* and, as Beringer notes, the same prohibitions apply to *all kinds* of indulgenced pious objects. It matters not that the payment be made merely on the score of the *cost of the material.* (To charge for the *spiritual* value would, of course, be rank simony.) On the other hand, no loss of Indulgences is incurred by ordering a number of pious objects from a dealer or a religious house, with instructions to get them blessed before despatch, even though the remittance, for the material and carriage, be forwarded after the blessing has been accomplished. The common sense of this distinction is plain. The *traffic*, or bargain, was made *before* the things were blessed: the mere fact of paying one's debt Trafficking forbidden.

[1] Hence it is not necessary to get one's beads reindulgenced just because they have been mislaid for a few weeks, and found again.

will not injure the Indulgences. Hence it would not do for a Catholic to decline to pay on the pious ground that the dealer surely could not wish to traffic in indulgenced goods!

Roman forbiddance of traffic.

These principles are summed up in a decision of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, of July 16, 1887, in which the answer "*Yes*" is returned to the following questions: "(1) Are indulgenced objects to be given to the faithful free of all charges, so that (2) if anything be taken, either as payment, or in exchange, or as a present, or as an alms, the Indulgences are thereby lost?" It does not follow from the above decision, of course, that priests are at all obliged to supply their people with such objects at their own expense. It is only ruled that, *if* they give such objects, no remuneration, either in kind or in cash, may be accepted *after* the things have been indulgenced.

Nor is it forbidden to pay for having a new chain or thread put to indulgenced beads, a part of the object which does not receive the Indulgences.

N.B.—The indulgences attached to a pious object are not forfeited by its being lent for another's use, nor by being borrowed without the owner's knowledge. It seems doubtful, however, whether the *borrower* can gain the indulgences: hence it is safer to possess an indulgenced rosary, etc., of one's own.

Particular Pious Objects.

Crosses and Crucifixes.—We may here notice a special and permanent *set* or code of Indulgences, called "Apostolic," or "Papal," granted by the Pope, on succeeding to the Fisherman's Throne, and to be distinguished from other Indulgences constantly issuing from the Holy Office,[1] in the Pope's name. The difference between the two is that the Papal Indulgences are for attaching to sacred objects—of every kind—while the others are given mainly to persons performing certain specific acts of piety or virtue. Moreover, the Papal Indulgences, once renewed (and possibly modified) by the new Pope, remain unchanged during his reign.[2] Any priest who has received the faculty from the Holy See (and it is exceptional to find a priest in missionary work without it) can impart the Papal Indulgences to Crosses or Crucifixes, or to any pious objects which conform to rules as to material form explained above. The "Papal" Indulgences.

But these Papal Indulgences are not gained by simple *possession* of the indulgenced objects, though possession is essential. The prayers or other works mentioned in the Papal grant must be performed *exactly as prescribed* therein. How gained.

In Detail.—The pious object in question must be carried upon the person, or, if not, be kept in one's room, or in some other suitable place in the house; and, when not carried, the prayers that may be prescribed for various Indulgences must be recited devoutly *before the said object.* If a person have *several* objects similarly indulgenced, How used.

[1] *I.e.*, under the reconstitution of the Roman Courts by Pius X. Formerly it was the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences that dealt with such matters.

[2] This practice of issuing an official list of Papal Indulgences applicable to pious objects was first adopted by Benedict XIII. (A.D. 1724). Beringer, vol. i., p. 473.

he gains no more than if he had only one. But, then, some forms of objects are more suited for carrying about than others.

Crucifixes, and the Plenary Indulgence "For a Happy Death."

Three Indulgences for death

A certain confusion of thought appears to exist at times concerning the above Plenary Indulgence. For clearness, we must distinguish among *three* different "Plenaries" for the hour of death: (1) The one called "The Last Blessing," or "The Papal Blessing," given to the dying *person* after the last Sacraments, and which needs *the attendance and ministry of a priest* with power to confer it. The power is always possessed by priests having general care of souls. (2) The Plenary Indulgence for the hour of death *attached to indulgenced pious objects*, or to membership with some confraternity, etc. For *this* Plenary *no* attendance of a priest is needed. It suffices to fulfil the conditions. Hence its value when a priest cannot be had. (3) The Plenary Indulgence *technically called* "For a Happy Death." This is a Plenary sometimes attached to Crucifixes *belonging to Priests* (it is not given to Crucifixes presented for blessing by the faithful). The intention of the grant is that the priest may not only use it for his own death, but for personally lending to the sick and dying: and these can by its means gain a Plenary Indulgence in their last moments, if they fulfil the conditions, to be presently mentioned.

No special form of prayer need be used by the priest in imparting it, and this feature distinguishes the present Indulgence from No. 1. It also differs from No. 2 in *requiring* the attendance of a priest, and in that it may be imparted to any number of persons with one and the same

Crucifix; whereas the Plenary for the hour of death attached to pious objects having Papal Indulgences avails the *owner only*. The Holy Father, when giving this faculty "For a Happy Death," may, of course, fix what conditions he pleases. But the following are the usual ones:

(*a*) The Crucifix must be presented to the dying person *by the priest who owns it*. According to Beringer, any other way of conveyance endangers the Indulgence, such as sending it through another person (even a priest), or—still more—putting the Crucifix in circulation round the parish or hospital!

(*b*) On the part of the sick person, the conditions are: Confession and Communion, "or, if the latter be impossible," invocation of the Holy Name "Jesus," to be uttered at least in the heart if it cannot be pronounced with the lips.[1] The person must also accept his sufferings and death from God with resignation.

By a grant originating with Pope Innocent XI., and confirmed under Innocent XIII. by the Sacred Congregation, Crosses *which have touched the Holy Places and relics in Palestine* thereby become possessed of all the Papal Indulgences; and this privilege was extended (August 19, 1895) to other pious objects. These souvenirs of places hallowed by the footsteps of the God-Man need no other *blessing* beyond contact with the same. They are, however, subject to the same rules and restrictions as pious objects blessed with the Papal faculty, such as have been explained above.

[1] Beringer, vol. i., pp. 483-484. In the case of No. 1 (Last Blessing), however, the invocation of the Holy Name is *not* an *alternative* for when Sacraments are impossible, but *essential* in every case, as are also the dispositions of resignation above mentioned (Sept. 22, 1892). As this Decree expressly confirms one of 1775, where there is added the qualifying clause, "as long as the sick person is conscious," one may hope that the unconscious patient will still gain the Indulgence without the Invocation, if otherwise disposed

Rosaries and Chaplets.

The term "Rosary" applies, strictly speaking, to the complete Rosary of Our Lady, comprising *fifteen* decades. The idea underlying the selection of the name is that of a spiritual crown of roses composed of prayers, woven for the glorious Queen of Heaven by her devout clients. The invocation "Mystical Rose," addressed to Mary in the Litany of Loreto, adds further appropriateness to the term. The name "Chaplet" is more properly reserved to a *third part* (five decades) of the Rosary, or to other strings of prayer-beads variously arranged and connected with different forms of Catholic devotion. But it is very common to speak of a chaplet as a "rosary"—taking the part for the whole. The popular term, "a *pair* of beads," though of some antiquity, is not so intelligible.

Dominican Rosary.

Let us first say a word about the nature of this very favourite devotion to the Mother of God. In the form in which, as Pius V. declares, in his brief of September 17, 1569, it is piously believed St. Dominic, the founder of the Order of Friars Preachers, received it by heavenly inspiration, and in which his sons have since propagated it, the Rosary of Our Lady consists of 150 recitals of the "Hail Mary" on the smaller beads, each *ten* being preceded by an "Our Father," said on each of the fifteen larger beads.

The body of the material rosary is thus arranged. First comes a large bead, then ten smaller beads placed somewhat closer to each other than the large bead is to the first smaller one. This group of one large and ten small beads is popularly called a "decade," or division of ten, though in reality composed of *eleven* beads—*i.e.*, counting the "Our Father." A "chaplet" con-

sists of *five* decades, and is the form of beads more commonly used. It is not very common to meet—among the laity—with a rosary having the whole fifteen decades of beads, even among those who may recite the whole Rosary daily.

It has become the universal custom to interpose a " Glory be to the Father," etc., between each of the decades. But there is no corresponding bead, nor is its recital binding for gaining the Indulgences, any more than are the *Credo* (Apostles' Creed) and three " Hail Marys " often said upon the one large and three small beads which form the usual pendant of the chaplet, and to which people often attach a cross, or medals, or both—according to choice.[1]

Manner of recital.

In the Dominican form of the Rosary, which is in very common, if not commonest, use, one or other of fifteen selected incidents, or " mysteries," of the life of Our Lord or of Our Lady is to be piously meditated on during the recital of each decade. These mysteries are classified in three groups of five :

Mysteries to be contemplated.

The Joyful Mysteries.—(1) The Annunciation by Gabriel to Mary. (2) Our Lady's visit to her cousin, St. Elizabeth. (3) The Birth of Our Lord. (4) The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. (5) The Finding of Jesus in the Temple among the Doctors.

The Sorrowful Mysteries.—(1) Our Lord's Prayer and Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. (2) His Scourging at the Pillar. (3) His being crowned with Thorns. (4) His carrying the Cross. (5) His Crucifixion and Death upon the Cross.

[1] Some have the excellent custom of adding the *De profundis* (Ps. cxxix. ; Prot., Ps. cxxx.) for the souls in Purgatory. But this is not required for the Rosary Indulgences. It has, however, Indulgences of its own if recited once at nightfall, or three times a day, *adding the versicle,* " Eternal rest give to them," etc. (*Raccolta,* No. 404).

The Glorious Mysteries.—(1) The Resurrection of Our Lord from the dead. (2) His Ascent into Heaven from Olivet. (3) The Coming of the Holy Ghost. (4) The Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven. (5) Her Crowning in Heaven and the glory of the Saints.

Degree of Meditation.

No very elaborate thought upon these truths is required: it is enough to dwell upon them simply and reverently, or at least to direct the prayers recited to the honour of Our Lord or of His Mother as contemplated *in the particular mystery* under contemplation.

Excellence of the devotion.

The great advantage of this devotion is that it deeply impresses upon the mind those leading Christian verities with which, according to the Divine scheme of Redemption, Our Lady is so closely associated. Thus, the devout reciter of the Rosary grows in that combined knowledge and love of the Divine Son and of His Immaculate Virgin Mother, which forms the distinctive mark of genuine Catholicism.

Convert difficulties.

Our convert should not be discouraged if, at first, he has almost to force himself to say the Rosary as a matter of dry principle, and feels unable to do so out of affection. It is only natural that such an essentially Catholic growth as a truly filial devotion to Mary—albeit our true spiritual Mother through "the grace of adoption of sons"—should develop somewhat slowly. This is the less to be wondered at if the form of non-Catholicism, which the convert formerly followed, has schooled him, or her, to depreciate or to ignore Our Lord's Mother, and to regard her as a mere passive tool momentarily assumed by God for the purpose of the Incarnation, but to be tossed aside when done with, and consistently "snubbed" in public by the Model Human Son on every possible occasion! If the convert be a female, then in proportion as the

grace of God takes fuller possession of her soul, it will subdue the mere natural disinclination of many a woman to worshipping any member of her own sex. It is so very different for those who from their infancy have had the sweet name of "Mother Mary" continually upon their lips.

Then, too, the "Reformed" religion objects to what it styles "vain repetitions," forgetting that Our Lord in the Garden repeated "the same words."[1] Thus the constant rehearsal of the same prayer-forms in the Rosary may at first pall somewhat on the convert; and, indeed, quite apart from prejudices of early education, such repetition may produce on some characters a sense of weary monotony. The feeling, however, is likely to wear off—though it does not always, even in Catholics of long standing—the more thoroughly one enters into the contemplation of the successive mysteries. Sense of monotony.

Conditions for Gaining the Indulgences Attached to Chaplets or Rosaries.

There are *three* conditions, though not all of them are necessary in the case of *all* chaplets.

(1) The beads must be *blessed*. (2) They must he held and handled, or "told," in the usual way, bead by bead. (3) The person must dwell mentally upon the mystery belonging to each decade.

Upon which rules, several observations must be made:

1. As to the *Blessing*. There is one Indulgence at least (granted by Sixtus IV., May 12, 1479), which does not require a *blessed* chaplet—namely, *five years and five quarantines* for the recital of a third part of the Rosary (five decades). Then, the Little Chaplet of the Immaculate Conception need not be blessed, either. But Exceptions to need of blessing.

[1] Matt. xxvi. 44.

in the case of other chaplets the blessing is essential for profiting by the Indulgences. The Indulgences for recital *in common*, presently to be mentioned, form a further exception to the rule of blessing.

Faculty required.

For gaining the Indulgences which the *Dominican Fathers* have a special "faculty" for imparting, the beads must be blessed by a *Dominican* priest, or one who has had the privilege communicated to him by the Dominican Order. Similarly, the Papal, the Bridgettine, and "Croisier" Indulgences require beads blessed by priests having these several "faculties." The Chaplet of the Seven Dolours must be blessed by a Servite Father, or by one who has received the Servite "faculty."

Use of beads.

2. As to *holding the beads* during recital. This is always necessary in *private* recitals. But when the beads are recited in common—by the priest for the congregation, or by several people together (*e.g.*, at home), it is enough that the indulgenced beads be held and "told" by the priest, or person leading the devotions, and that the rest answer the prayers and (where meditation is demanded) meditate on the mysteries. They need not even have beads with them.

So anxious is the Church to maintain this excellent practice, which may often supply deficiencies as regards morning or night prayers, that special Indulgences have been granted for the recital *in common.* These are: (1) *Ten years* and *ten quarantines* obtainable *once a day*, by saying a chaplet (five decades) in common. (2) A Plenary Indulgence obtainable on the *fourth Sunday of the Month*, provided that the above common recital has taken place at least *three* times in *each week*, on the usual conditions—*i.e.*, Confession, Communion, Visiting a church, and praying there for the Pope's Intentions (Pius IX.,

May 12, 1851). N.B.—For *these* Indulgences the beads need *not* be blessed.[1]

A Decree (Nov. 13, 1893) allows slight manual occupation to be continued during recital in common, but not external work needing such attention as prevents recollection of mind during the devotion. No doubt certain more mechanical forms of needlework, or culinary work, would come under this permission.

3. *Meditation on the Mysteries of the Life of Christ or the Blessed Virgin.*—The person saying the Rosary, whether in private or in common with others, must think devoutly upon the mystery belonging to each successive decade, during recital of the same. If incapable of doing this —*e.g.*, from lack of education—a pious recital of the *Paters* and *Aves* is enough. Benedict XIII., however, in making this concession to the unlettered (May 26, 1727), expressly desires that they shall strive to accustom themselves to meditate upon the mysteries of Redemption.

Each mystery in its turn.

It will not do to prolong the meditation of one particular mystery beyond the limits of its proper decade. There are two methods in Catholic use

[1] One may here mention the special Indulgences granted by Leo XIII., and confirmed, with modifications, in perpetuity, July 23, 1898, in connection with the Rosary devotions prescribed by the same Pope to be held daily in churches and chapels during the month of October: (1) An Indulgence of *seven years and seven quarantines* for each day on which the faithful shall recite, either publicly in church or in private, at least five decades of the Rosary. (2) A Plenary Indulgence, obtainable either on the feast of the Holy Rosary (first Sunday in October), *or* on one day during its octave, by those who recite at least five decades *both* on the feast itself *and* on each day of the octave. Conditions: Confession, Communion, and *Visit* to some church, *praying* there for *the Pope's Intentions*. (3) A Plenary Indulgence on one day at each one's choice, to those who, during the month of October, and after the octave of the feast of the Holy Rosary has expired, shall recite at least five decades daily *during ten days*.

Aids to Meditation.

for assisting this meditation: (1) That of introducing into each "Hail Mary" a reference to the mystery in contemplation, after the word "Jesus"—*e.g.*, "... the fruit of thy womb, Jesus, *Whom thou didst conceive by the Holy Ghost*" (First Joyful Mystery), or "... *Who was scourged at the pillar*" (Second Sorrowful Mystery). This plan is adopted in parts of Germany, and no doubt elsewhere, at public service. (2) The other plan, customary with us, is to preface the decade with a brief description of the mystery to be contemplated. A prayer to Our Lady, referring to the mystery, is also sometimes added at the end of the decade belonging to it. This method is to be found in our ordinary Prayer-Books. But neither method is binding, provided a person dwell upon the mysteries in their proper turns.

Which chaplets require meditation?

This meditation on mysteries is essential (with the exception in favour of the unlettered) for gaining the *Dominican* Indulgences. It is *not* necessary for the Papal, the Bridgettine, nor for the "Croisier" ones. In the case of the "Seven Dolours" chaplet (blessed by the Servite Fathers) it is, generally speaking, necessary not only to meditate in turn on the Seven Sorrows of Mary, but also vocally to express the title of each mystery in the proper place. But Leo XIII. (May 13, 1886) exempted from these conditions those who, for *any* reason, were prevented from reading and meditating, so that they could gain all the Indulgences (except three) by simply reciting the prayers on the beads.

Varying mysteries.

Those who only say a third part of the Rosary daily (five decades) are free to vary the groups of mysteries to be contemplated, distributing them as follows: *Sundays*—the Glorious Mysteries, or else those most in harmony with the ecclesiastical season in progress—*e.g.*, in Advent and till Lent the Joyful Mysteries; then the Sorrowful, till

Easter ; and thenceforward, till the next Advent, the Glorious Mysteries. *Mondays* and *Thursdays*—Joyful Mysteries ; *Tuesdays* and *Fridays*, the Sorrowful ; *Wednesdays* and *Saturdays*—the Glorious. This order is *prescribed* to *members of the Confraternity of the Rosary ;* otherwise, it is not essential for gaining Indulgences.

Interrupted recital.

The Dominican Indulgences require the complete recital of at least five decades *at a time.* Unless a person belong to the Confraternity of the Rosary, and therefore enjoys a special privilege as regards interruption between decades, any *notable* break must be avoided. Thus, Beringer points out[1] that it would not do to spread the five decades over a whole day. Yet he holds that a brief interruption will not invalidate Indulgences, and even argues from analogy that the break may be as considerable as that mentioned in connection with the Way of the Cross,[2] provided it be not greatly prolonged, or be made for the sake of *secular* occupations.

Other Chaplets.

THE CHAPLET OF ST. BRIDGET.

Origin.

This form of chaplet prayer is traced to St. Bridget—the one of Sweden, not of Ireland. By her consent, and largely owing to the desire for perfection which her holy example had inspired, her husband, Ulfric, after years of virtuous and happy wedlock, devoted himself to religious life in the Cistercian Order. After his holy death, Bridget herself abandoned the world, and ultimately became the foundress of a convent called after the Saviour. She received many supernatural communications from Heaven, which have been approved as private revelations of edifying

[1] Beringer, vol. i., p. 520. [2] See p. 206, No. 5.

import by several Popes. St. Bridget died at Rome in 1373 ; her feast is kept on Oct. 8.

Purpose of chaplet.

By means of this chaplet, Bridget designed to honour Our Blessed Lady and to commemorate the sixty-three years of her spotless life on earth. The Chaplet contains six "decades," or divisions, each consisting of One *Pater*, ten *Aves*, and one *Credo* (Apostles' Creed). To these six "decades" one further *Pater* is added to complete the number of *seven* (*Paters*) in honour of Mary's Seven Dolours, and also three more *Aves*, to complete, in "Hail Marys" alone, the above reputed number of Our Lady's years.

Abbreviated form.

This is the original form. But probably, as it would seem, for the convenience of those who only carry the ordinary five-decade chaplet of Our Lady, the Holy See has extended the Indulgences to an abbreviated form of Bridgettine chaplet. The abbreviation is made as follows, using the ordinary beads of Our Lady : Only *five* decades are said, each consisting of one *Pater*, ten *Aves*, and one *Credo*. The additional *Pater* and three *Aves* may be omitted.

An error.

It is an error—and not an uncommon one—to suppose that the Bridgettine Indulgences can be gained by simply reciting the *Paters*, *Aves*, and *Glorias* on a five-decade chaplet to which the Bridgettine blessing has been given—*i.e.*, by saying the ordinary Rosary of Our Lady without the Meditation on mysteries. It is true the *meditation* is *not* required. But the *Glorias* form *no part of the Bridgettine chaplet*, while the *Credos*, thus omitted, are *essential* to it.

Conditions for Gaining the Indulgences.

1. The beads must be blessed by the Canons of the Most Holy Saviour, Rome, or by a priest who has had the power communicated to him.

2. The beads must be handled, or "told" in the usual way.

3. The *whole* chaplet must be recited at a time —subject, of course, to what has been said about interruptions in the previous section.

4. N.B.—Whether the Bridgettine chaplet be said in its longer or shorter form, no Meditation on mysteries is necessary for gaining the Indulgences. No Meditation obligatory.

CHAPLET OF THE FATHERS OF THE CROSS (PÈRES CROISIERS).[1]

To be strictly accurate, the heading should be: The ordinary five-decade chaplet as indulgenced by the Fathers of the Cross (or by a priest having the same faculty). For this is not a distinct form of chaplet. The only difference lies in the richness, and adaptability to a person's circumstances and leisure, which characterize these Indulgences. Till quite lately, the power granted by the Holy See for conferring them was strictly reserved to the Fathers of the Cross. But during quite recent years, Pius X. has extended the *faculty* to the Association of "Priest Adorers" (of the Blessed Sacrament), and also to the members of the "Priests' Communion League."[2] A devotional convenience.

The unusually liberal Indulgences are: 500 *days* for each *Pater*, and 500 *days* for each *Ave* recited on the beads, *even though only one of either be said at a time.* Hence, not only may the recital be interrupted, but it is not even necessary to say, or intend to say, more than one *Pater* or one *Ave*. Thus, these indulgenced beads may be Exceptional Indulgences.

[1] They have houses in Holland and Belgium.

[2] Called in Italian, "Lega sacerdotale Eucharistica." The above English rendering—"Priests' Communion League"—has been adopted by members to avoid confusion with the "Priest Adorers," who had already become known in America as "The Eucharistic League."

used for any odd *Paters* or *Aves* one may say during the day—*e.g.*, for a Sacramental penance.[1] Meditation of mysteries is not required for the "Croisier" Indulgences.

Difficulty: chaplet variously indulgenced.

This seems a convenient place for considering the common case where different sets of Indulgences are attached to one and the same chaplet of beads. For, an ordinary five-decade chaplet that has been blessed may have had communicated to it the Papal Indulgences, those given to beads blessed by the Dominican Fathers, the "Croisier" Indulgences, etc. . . . Can a person gain *all* these Indulgences by means of a single recital of the chaplet in question? There is a decree of Pius X. (June 12, 1907), granting, as an exceptional favour, that the *Dominican* Indulgences and the "*Croisier*" Indulgences, may be gained simultaneously; otherwise, as a matter of present general law, the thing cannot be done. To explain:

Why recital to be repeated.

When we were dealing with the conditions for gaining several Plenary Indulgences which happen to concur on the same day, we saw that one *Communion and Confession* sufficed for them all, but that *the other works prescribed*—prayer for the Pope's Intentions, or a Visit to a church—had to be *repeated* for each Indulgence. The reason for this distinction is that a second Communion on the same day is not *lawful*, and a second Confession is *not*, humanly speaking, *feasible;* whereas the prayers or works prescribed can well be repeated. So, too, in the case before us, the chaplet can be repeated without great hardship, and therefore must be—that is, if the person wants to gain more than one set of the Indulgences attached to his beads.

[1] See above, p. 218, fourth paragraph.

THE LITTLE CHAPLET OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

This devotion purports to honour that glorious and unique privilege of Mary by which she was conceived into this world free from the stain of Original Sin, in virtue of the foreseen merits of the Divine Son Whom she was destined to bear. Purport of.

It is performed usually on a chaplet consisting of three divisions—in the place of the decades of the ordinary chaplet of Our Lady, already noticed. Each of these divisions consists of *five* beads, one large and four small ones. How made.

This chaplet is recited in the following way : "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." Unlike the case of any other chaplet, this beginning is necessary for obtaining the Indulgences. How used.

Then : "Blessed be the Holy and Immaculate Conception of the most Blessed Virgin Mary" (*once*).

Then, the "Our Father" *once*, on the large bead, and the "Hail Mary" *four times*, on the small beads, and the "Glory be to the Father," etc., *once ;* there is no bead to this prayer.

With the single exception of the invocation, "In the Name of the Father," etc., the above method is also to be repeated in the case of each of the remaining two divisions.

The Indulgences, which (in the present instance) do not require that the beads be *blessed*, are as follows : Indulgences.

For every recital, 300 *days :* and a *Plenary* Indulgence *once* in the month,[1] the conditions being Confession and Communion (only). With regard

[1] When a Plenary Indulgence is offered once a month for the daily or frequent performance of some devotion, the person (unless the contrary be *stated*) is at liberty to choose his own day for gaining it by fulfilling the conditions prescribed.

to the Confession, the reader will note what has been said farther back on this point.[1]

Character of the devotion.

In this devotion, we unite with our Holy Mother in thanking the Triune God for making her Immaculate. Hence, we find the notions of the Trinity and of Mary's privilege closely interwoven. Thus we have the opening invocation of the Trinity and the *three Paters* said on the large beads. The *twelve Aves* in groups of four refer to the "Woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of *twelve* stars"[2]—assumed as a type of Mary. For, though the offspring of a fallen race, she was freely clad in the first instant of her being with the resplendent holiness of original justice, derived from the merits of Jesus, the Son of Justice.

The "Miraculous Medal."[3]

It would be quite impossible to name all the various kinds of sacred medals to be met with. But a word may be said about one of Our Lady on account of the fame which it enjoys.

Origin.

The "Miraculous Medal" owes its origin to an apparition of Our Lady granted to Sister Catherine Labouré, a spiritual daughter of St. Vincent de Paul, in 1830. On its *obverse* side the Immaculate Virgin is represented with rays of glory issuing from the hands,[4] and round the medal is the legend: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." The *reverse* of the medal has a central monogram—an M interwoven with a cross—and surrounded by twelve

[1] P. 217 (*b*). [2] Apoc. (Prot., Rev.) xii. 1.

[3] See *Miraculous Medal*, by Lady Fullerton. Burns Oates and Washbourne, London.

[4] The besom-like appearance of these divergent rays accounts for the fancy name popularly given to this image of Mary in Spain, "Our Lady of the Broom" (*Nuestra Señora de la escoba*).

stars.[1] Under the monogram are two hearts, representing the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. It has come to be called "miraculous" on account of the many striking spiritual and temporal wonders which God has pleased to work in behalf of those honouring His Mother by the use of this medal. Amongst spiritual favours, marvellous and unexpected conversions figure prominently.

How "miraculous."

The faculty for blessing and indulgencing this medal is reserved to the Lazarist Fathers—also called Fathers of the Mission (founded by St. Vincent de Paul),[2] and to such priests as have had the power communicated to them.

Who can indulgence it.

It is not to be thought that wonderful favours are confined to the devout use of this particular medal only. Equally marvellous ones are on record in connection with other medals, and—as we have seen—with the Badge of the Sacred Heart.

Not *exclusively* "miraculous."

Here is a well-authenticated incident of the terrible earthquake at Messina during Christmas, 1908. A boy student at the Jesuit college in that city was still in bed when the shock came. As the room began to rock, this boy's medal of Our Lady, which hung at the head of his bedstead, swung against his face, and on feeling it, he clutched it with his hand, as the room collapsed, calling out to Our Lady for protection. The next thing he became aware of—as he afterwards narrated to the Superior—was that he found himself, he knew not how, in the courtyard below, among other rescued schoolfellows, safe and absolutely uninjured. In all probability, the medal in question was not the one known as "miraculous," but one worn upon occasion as a badge by members of college Sodalities of Our Lady.

A boy's marvellous escape.

[1] See footnote (2), p. 252.

[2] Or rather founded by M. and Mme. de Gondy, under the guidance of the Saint. See *Life of St. Vincent*, by Mgr. Bougaud, p. 72.

CHAPTER XVIII

SCAPULARS

Origin of the lay scapular.

WHEN religious Orders began to gather the laity into confraternities under their spiritual control and direction, it was natural they should assign to the members some badge or token of their affiliation. For this purpose the plan was devised of investing them with an imitation on a reduced scale of that portion of the monks' habit called the "scapular"—a term derived from the Latin *scapula*, meaning "shoulder"—in allusion to this garment being worn upon the shoulders, hanging down in front and behind nearly to the ground. The "scapular," worn as a religious badge by the laity, is simply a reproduction in miniature or skeleton of this religious overgarment. It is composed of two small rectangular pieces of stuff connected together by strings, or tapes, which are attached to the corners of the pieces of stuff, the whole being passed over the head so that the strings rest on either shoulder, and the squares of cloth respectively on the breast and between the shoulders of the wearer. Of course, the scapular is not worn visibly like the religious garment, but under the clothing.

Chief scapulars.

There is a considerable variety of scapulars, each representing some special form of Catholic devotion. The following are the titles of those in more common use:

The Scapular of the Most Holy Trinity of the

Sacred Passion, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, of the Seven Dolours of Our Lady, of the Immaculate Conception, of Our Lady of Good Counsel, and of St. Joseph.[1]

Of the aforesaid scapulars (mentioned in the *text*), only *three* involve *membership with a confraternity*, while among the rest some entail certain short prayers of obligation; others only need to be worn with a devout intention, special conditions, however, having to be fulfilled in order to gain the various Indulgences offered to the wearers. All of them, without distinction, are placed by the Holy See under the control of some religious Order or Congregation, which has power to grant to other priests the faculty for investing the faithful.

A few words will now be said, first of all, concerning the three *confraternity* Scapulars.

"White" Scapular.

Scapular of the Most Holy Trinity, or "White" Scapular.—Belonging to the Order of Trinitarians, founded by St. John de Matha and St. Felix de Valois, and approved by the Holy See (Innocent III.), Jan. 28, 1168.[2] The habit of the Order,

[1] There is also the less well-known Black Scapular of the Passionist Fathers and one of St. Camillus de Lellis, patron of the dying. Then, of course, there is the Franciscan Scapular worn by the lay Tertiaries of the Order of St. Francis Assisi, in addition to the knotted waistcord. But this one stands in a separate category, since these Tertiaries are not members of a mere confraternity, but—as Leo XIII. declared—constitute a "veritable Order." They have one year's novitiate, after which—if approved—they are admitted to their "profession," at which, without taking any *vow*, they promise to observe certain rules of piety and conduct, compatible with life in the world. There is also the Red Scapular of the *Precious Blood*, worn by members of the confraternity of that name, and blessed by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. But the mere wearing of it does not entitle to any Indulgences. Further, it is to be carefully distinguished from the Scapular of the Sacred Passion, which is also *red*, but *does* confer Indulgences.

[2] As will be seen, some other scapulars are white in colour, but the name "White" is used as distinctive of the present one.

revealed to the Pope during celebration of Holy Mass, is *white*, having on the breast a Cross, the vertical beam of which is *red* and the transverse beam *blue*. Hence, in the lay scapular, the square of white cloth which is worn on the *breast* bears a Cross of this description. The rise of the Trinitarian Order was connected with the time of Mahomedan invasions of Christian countries, when many Christians became prisoners of the Saracen, and these Religious were vowed to relieve and to ransom the Christian captives.

But they extended their charitable mission to succouring all Christian captives in infidel lands. It is estimated that between the end of the twelfth century and the opening of the nineteenth, the Trinitarians had ransomed some 900,000 captives by the charitable alms of the faithful.

"Brown" Scapular.

The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, or "*Brown*" *Scapular*, is of all others the most largely used by Catholics. The origin of this scapular should be particularly interesting to Englishmen, seeing that its prototype was—according to a venerable tradition—delivered by the Blessed Virgin herself in a vision granted to the English Carmelite Saint, Simon Stock, General of the Western branch of his Order, while at Cambridge. Of this vision the learned Pope, Benedict XIV., writes that he readily accepts it as a certain fact, and that in his opinion everyone ought to regard it as genuine.[1] The promises attached to the devout wearing of this scapular in Mary's honour—namely, that the person will find favour with God at death, and be delivered from eternal punishment, are, of course, not to be understood as dispensing the wearer from virtuous living or from true repentance. But it is piously to be believed that by thus honouring

[1] Cited by Beringer, vol. ii., p. 245, from the works of Benedict XIV. Venice, 1767, tome ix., p. 181.

the Mother of God, the wearer will establish a special claim to her motherly protection and mighty power of intercession with her Divine Son, and thus obtain special graces for perseverance in good, or for a true conversion before death. Frequent experiences bear out this belief. But to rely on the scapular for salvation while clinging impenitently to a life of sin, or refusing the ministrations of the Church, would, of course, be pure presumption and superstition.

There is attached besides to the Brown Scapular what is called the "Sabbatine Privilege," which those members of the Carmel Confraternity may obtain who observe certain conditions during life—viz., if they observe chastity according to their state of life, and recite daily the Little Office of Our Lady, or, if unable to read, provided they keep the fasts of the Church, and also abstain from flesh meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The nature of this privilege, according to the Decree published at the command of Paul V. (Jan. 20, 1613), and reinforced by Benedict XIV., is that, according to pious belief, Our Lady will extend her special favour and protection to wearers of the Carmelite Scapular after their death if in Purgatory, especially on *Saturday*, the day consecrated to Mary by the Church.[1]

The Carmelite Scapular is of *brown* cloth.

"Black" Scapular.

The Scapular of the Seven Dolours, or "Black" Scapular, belongs to the ancient order of Servites, or Servants of Our Lady, founded by seven gentlemen of Florence, who, in the twelfth century, abandoned the world and devoted themselves to an ascetical life of prayer and penance, the Sorrows of Mary, especially during the Passion of her Divine Son, forming the main theme of their pious contemplation and devotions. They de-

[1] Beringer, vol. ii., pp. 246, 247. The name "Sabbatine," of course, is derived from *Sabbatum—i.e.*, Saturday.

voted themselves to spreading devotion to these Sorrows among the faithful. They are known as the "Seven Founders." They are all canonized Saints, and are commemorated together on Feb. 11.

The Servite Order was approved by Pope Alexander IV. in 1255. Their black habit is attributed to Our Lady's own appointment during several visions of her granted to the Founders. The latter soon began to spread devotion to the Sorrowful Mother among the laity, delivering to them a small Scapular as a pledge of their wish to devote themselves in a special way to the service of Our Lady and to devotion for her Dolours; and this was the germ of a confraternity of the Seven Dolours first approved by Paul V., Feb. 14, 1607. The Scapular of the Seven Dolours is of *black* stuff. We may add here that the *Chaplet* of the Seven Dolours, referred to above,[1] is also under the control of the Servite Order.

Registration.

Before speaking briefly of other Scapulars, it will be useful to point out that it is essential, for enrolment in the above three Confraternities, that the names of new members be inscribed in a register by the priest who has the power to invest people with the Scapulars, and he has periodically to send in the names of the new members to the authorities of the respective Orders. The power of investing belongs of right to the authorities of the same, but is frequently communicated to other priests.

Regulations concerning the Principal Scapulars.

The making.

How to be Made.—Every Scapular consists of two pieces of stuff, in the form of a *square*, that is, the pieces must be *rectangular*, like the part

[1] P. 244.

of the religious habit which they represent. There is a decree forbidding the innovation of round or oval pieces.

The *material* is strictly regulated. It must be of *woollen* material, not cotton, nor linen, nor silk, still less of paper or metal. Moreover, the woollen stuff must be *woven*, not knitted, nor embroidered, nor the like. Disregard of this point renders the indulgencing of Scapulars null and void. *Felt* is an equally invalid material. The stuff.

It is lawful to embroider figures *on the woollen stuff*, and these need not be of wool themselves, nor even of the colour proper to any given Scapular, provided that they be moderate in extent, so that the substance of the Scapular itself and its colour *appear to predominate*. But a decree (June 18, 1898) forbids a Scapular, although of woollen stuff, to be so made that one side of a square is *entirely* covered up by some other material, while its other side is *entirely* covered by some picture. Under such conditions, the nature of the scapular would not be recognizable. This, however, does not prevent the squares being enveloped in a linen bag, for keeping them clean, which practice is lawful provided the said bag be not *sewn* on to the Scapular. Adornments. Unlawful covering.

Strings connecting the two pieces of the Scapular are not reckoned as part of the same; they may, therefore, be of any material that is preferred, and can be renewed at pleasure. As to their *colour*, this is only a matter of moment in the case of two Scapulars. The Red Scapular of the Passion *must* have *red* strings; so that, if a person attaches (as he is allowed to do) four or five different Scapulars to one and the same pair of strings, and the Scapular of the Passion is among them, the Indulgences of the *latter* are lost unless the colour chosen for the one pair of strings be *red*. Strings.

Strings necessary.

But though the connecting strings are not part of the Scapular—for they do not appear in the religious habit imitated—yet they cannot be *dispensed with*, and the woollen squares, *e.g.*, sewn or pinned on to the dress in front and behind. In the case of the Scapular of St. Joseph, again, the strings *must* be white. Hence *two* pairs of strings will be needed if the Passion Scapular and that of St. Joseph are worn.

Conditions for Gaining the Indulgences and Privileges.

1. That, upon a person's being invested with any Scapular *for the first time*, the Scapular *be blessed* and put upon the candidate by some priest who has received faculties for the purpose.

2. That the person *wear the scapular continually*, and after the proper fashion presently to be described.

Not all priests have powers.

Regarding the first of these conditions, as we are not writing expressly for priests, it will be unnecessary to go into the question of faculties, or of the form of investment to be observed, etc. Only, the applicant for enrolment need not be surprised if a priest sometimes declare his inability to oblige, since not every priest has powers to invest in all the various forms of Scapulars. Rather, the convert should admire herein the discipline prevailing in the Catholic Church with regard to the smallest things, and the check put upon irresponsible use of the ministry. The lack of these powers argues no ecclesiastical, nor other inferiority, in the priest concerned.

Renewal of Scapulars.

The only other point needing mention here is, that once a person has been duly invested with

any Scapular, he may, when it is worn out or lost, replace it with another, without having it blessed, or going through any form of ceremony. In this respect, Scapulars differ from other indulgenced pious objects, which cannot be thus replaced.[1]

To come now to the *second* condition given above, which closely concerns the candidate. The mere fact of having been duly invested with a Scapular does not entitle the recipient to the Indulgences attached. The Scapular must, besides, be actually *worn*, and worn *constantly*. It should be worn day and night, in sickness and in health. It is a loss to throw it off, whether for convenience, or from some unworthy motive—*e.g.*, out of human respect. For, if left off for a whole day, the Indulgences are lost for that day.[2]

How to be worn.

Way of Wearing the Scapular.—It must be so worn that the strings rest upon the shoulders, and the woollen squares rest respectively in front on the breast, and behind, more or less between the shoulder-blades. If the Scapulars become disarranged, so that both squares hang in front, or both on the back, no benefits are derived while this state of things lasts.

Wearing several scapulars.

Combined Scapulars.—As before stated, it is allowable to wear several Scapulars attached to one pair of strings, subject to the conditions as to the *colour* of the strings in the cases of the Passion Scapular and that of St. Joseph, already

[1] Formerly the White Scapular (of the Blessed Trinity) was in this respect exceptional, and needed to be re-blessed upon renewal; but this is no longer the case (Beringer, vol. i., p. 537).

[2] Some priests have power to bless Scapular Proxy-Medals, by carrying which about them, in a becoming manner, persons already invested in Scapulars may gain the same spiritual benefits as they would by wearing the woollen Scapulars in the approved way. For details, see Appendix II. at the end of this volume.

mentioned. But the two squares of woollen stuff belonging to each Scapular must be worn in their proper places—*i.e.*, front and back. Moreover, it is plain that a person who has been duly invested, say, with four or five Scapulars, will not gain all the Indulgences belonging to them by merely wearing one or two out of the number. It is not allowed, as has been observed, to *completely sew together* various Scapulars. But for convenience' sake it is allowable to tack the squares together by their upper rims only, with perhaps a single stitch through their centres in order to keep them together, so that they are still for the most part separated from one another.

The "Patchwork Scapular."

Some pious and ingenious mind devised what may be styled the "Patchwork Scapular." It consisted of one pair of Scapulars, each of the woollen squares being made by patching together separate pieces of cloth of the different colours belonging to the various Scapulars in which the person has been enrolled. The plan may answer well enough with counterpanes, but it is not a lawful combination for Scapulars; neither is the plan of sewing squares of different colours, one on the top of the other, making each piece a little smaller than the one beneath it, and so showing a rim of each colour. Even if the variously-sized squares were only stitched lightly to each other by one of their four sides, this arrangement would still be open to the objection that only the largest Scapular would be really *attached to the cords*.

Other Scapulars.

The following Scapulars, though controlled by religious congregations, are not representative of any *particular* religious habit, nor do they involve

belonging to a Confraternity, or being affiliated to any Order:

Origin of "Red" Scapular.

The Scapular of the Passion, or "Red" Scapular,[1] introduced among the faithful in consequence of an apparition vouchsafed to a Sister of Charity in 1846, on the evening of the octave day of St. Vincent de Paul's Feast, which was repeated on several other occasions. The Superior-General of the Mission (the Fathers of the Mission are also called Lazarists) paid little heed to the alleged revelation. But he casually gave an account of it a year later to Pope Pius IX. The Sovereign Pontiff not only took an interest in the recital, but immediately granted a faculty to all the Lazarist Fathers for blessing and distributing the Scapular of the Passion, bearing a representation of what the holy Sister had been shown during the apparitions—namely, a representation of Our Lord on the Cross, with the emblems of His Passion at its foot, and the words: "Holy Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, save us!" On the other side of the red Scapular, the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, with the invocation: "Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, protect us!"[2] The Rescript granting this favour was dated June 25, 1847, while a later rescript, March 21, 1848, authorized the Fathers to communicate the same faculty to other priests, secular and regular.

Strings must be *red* also.

Besides the other rules regulating all Scapulars, which have been explained further back, the strings connecting the two squares of red cloth *must be red also*.

[1] See footnote [1], p. 255.

[2] Contrary to what seems to have been the impression of some during recent years, a Rescript of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, as Beringer points out, declared that mere pieces of red stuff, *without the aforesaid figures*, do not suffice (June 8, 1898).

A scapular not a badge.

Scapular of the Sacred Heart.—This Scapular, which is not to be confused with "badges" of the Sacred Heart existing in the two forms presently to be mentioned, originated in France. It was sanctioned by the Holy See, April 4, 1900, and a special formula was prescribed for blessing it. The power of giving this blessing belongs to the Superior-General of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who is authorized to impart the faculty to other priests.

Colour.

It is made of *white* woollen stuff, having the usual connecting-strings. One of the squares has the customary representation of the Sacred Heart, the other one of Our Lady under the title of "Mother of Mercy." The Indulgences were granted by Leo XIII. (July 10, 1900) for the declared object "that thus fervent devotion and love towards the Heart of Jesus may be kept alive and continually increased among the faithful."

Scapular of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, worn in honour of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary, Mother of Sorrows. It was approved by a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, at the request of the Bishop of Marseilles and of the religious known as the "Daughters of the Sacred Heart." Indulgences were attached to its use by a brief of Leo XIII., of April 18, 1901.

Colour.

Like the previous Scapular, it is also *white*, but the emblems required on the two squares of cloth are somewhat different. On the one is represented the Heart of Jesus (in the usual way) and the Heart of Mary pierced with a sword, the instruments of the Passion being placed underneath the two hearts. The other square has a cross in *red* stuff.

Badges of the Sacred Heart.

These are sometimes spoken of popularly as "Scapulars," or "Little Scapulars." But this is really a misnomer. They have not the form of Scapulars, being single pieces of stuff—square, round, or oval in shape—worn upon the breast, in honour of Our Lord's Sacred Heart.

They are of two kinds: 1. The one *devised by Margaret Mary Alacoque*, the Visitation Nun of Paray-le-Monial, in France, and used by her to propagate devotion to the Sacred Heart in obedience to the injunction given her by Our Lord. *This* badge, which is made of *white* stuff, must have inscribed upon it the ejaculatory prayer: "Cease! the Sacred Heart is here!" which is accompanied by a representation of the Sacred Heart. Two kinds.

From the character of the grant of the Indulgence by Pius IX., Oct. 18, 1872, sought for Cardinal Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin, Beringer inclines to the view that *this* badge must be worn on the breast *suspended by a cord*, or *string*, something after the manner of a Scapular. The Indulgence consists of *one hundred days* to those who, while wearing the badge, say one *Pater*, and one *Ave Maria*, and one *Gloria Patri*.[1] Indulgence and conditions for.

There is no *necessity* here for any blessing, ceremony of investiture, or entry of names into a register, since the badge is not a Scapular, and does not fall under the rules governing them.

2. *The Badge of the Apostleship of Prayer*, or "League of Prayer in union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus," for which Père Ramière, S.J., the chief organizer of the Apostleship, obtained approval and Indulgences from Pius IX., June 14, 1877—within a year of that saintly Pontiff's

[1] Extended to all the faithful, March 28, 1873 (Pius IX.).

death. The present badge, besides having a representation of the Sacred Heart, must bear the legend : "Thy kingdom come!"—the motto of the Apostleship, embodying its true spirit. It is worn on the breast, but may be pinned on, or fastened in any way preferred. No string is needed. The badge *need* not be blessed, nor is the ceremonial drawn up for imposing it essential.[1]

Conditions for Indulgences.

To gain the Indulgences, one must be duly enrolled in the Apostleship of Prayer, and therefore, indirectly, the person must have his name *entered in an official register*, besides receiving a *certificate of admission*.

Two Indulgences.

The Indulgences attached to the Apostleship Badge are : *One hundred days each time* the wearer makes the ejaculation "Thy kingdom come!" at least *in his heart*. Also *seven years and seven quarantines* for wearing it *outwardly* during public devotions, or during half an hour's adoration of the Blessed Sacrament *exposed*.

Many marvellous favours, both temporal and spiritual, have been obtained through the use of both of the above badges. Space does not allow even a selection from them. The first-named has often been a protection against the advance of plagues—*e.g.*, at Marseilles, in 1720.

"Blue" Scapular : origin.

Scapular of the Immaculate Conception, or "Blue" Scapular. We owe this Scapular to a heavenly communication bestowed upon Ursula Benincasa, foundress of the Theatine Order at Naples in the seventeenth century. She was afterwards canonized by Pius VI., Aug. 7, 1793. In a vision vouchsafed to her by the Blessed Virgin, who bore the Divine Infant in her arms, Ursula was bidden to institute a hermitage for herself and thirty-three other pious women, whose

[1] It would seem extremely doubtful whether certain *buttons*, worn in place of badges, entitle the wearers to the badge Indulgence.

habit was to be like that in which the Holy Mother appeared. Promise of special favours were made to those who should adopt this form of life. Later, the saintly foundress besought Our Lord to extend His blessings to persons living in the world who would devote themselves to the honour of the "august Virgin, conceived without sin," and should practise chastity according to their state of life, and wear the little blue Scapular. To assure her that this prayer had been heard, Our Lord granted her to see in ecstasy angels bearing Scapulars of the kind, and scattering them broadcast over the earth.

The Theatine nuns, under Ursula, then began to make and to distribute these blue Scapulars, which were devoutly welcomed by numbers of the faithful, and became the means of increased holiness among them.

Approval and Indulgences.

In order to preserve and multiply these fruits of piety, Clement X. authorized (Jan. 30, 1671) the Theatine Regular Clerks—the male branch of the Order — to bless the blue Scapular; Clement XI. granted several Indulgences to the wearers (May 12, 1710), and Pius IX. empowered (Sept. 19, 1851) the Theatine Superior-General to communicate the faculty of blessing and indulgencing the same to any priest who might apply for it.

How made.

For securing the Indulgences, the Scapular must be of *blue* woollen stuff, but the particular shade of blue is immaterial. It is usual, though not essential, that a representation of Our Lady under the title of the Immaculate Conception should be added to the Scapular. The strings may be of any colour.

This Scapular is here classed with those which do not oblige to membership with any Confraternity; *nor is such membership obligatory*, in spite of the fact that there exists a corresponding

Confraternity under Theatine control (established in 1894), the form of reception into which includes investment with the blue Scapular.

There are no prayers or practices of obligation. The members are, however, *recommended* the use of the Little Chaplet of the Immaculate Conception[1] and invocations of Mary Immaculate, a few of which are indulgenced independently.[2]

The ends proposed to persons invested with the Blue Scapular are : (1) To honour the great privilege of Mary's preservation from Original Sin ; (2) To obtain the conversion of those leading vicious lives.

The Indulgences attached are rich and plentiful.

Scapular of Our Lady of Good Counsel.

"Good Counsel" Scapular.

Approved by Leo XIII., Dec. 21, 1893, at the petition of the Hermits of St. Augustine. It was designed for the use of the Pious Association in honour of Our Lady of Good Counsel established in 1753 with the sanction of Benedict XIV. But wearers may benefit by the Indulgences without being enrolled in that association. The faculty for blessing this Scapular belongs to the Superior-General of the Augustinians, who can communicate it to other priests.

Form of Scapular.

The *material* for this Scapular is *white* woollen stuff. One square has a picture of the famous painting of Our Lady of Good Counsel, venerated at the Augustinian Church of Gennazzano, Italy ; the other one bears the Papal arms—tiara and cross-keys—with the legend : "My child, follow her counsels.—Leo XIII." There are no obligatory practices. The end proposed is to honour the Mother of Good Counsel, and to seek her guidance in the difficulties of life.

[1] See p. 295.

[2] See *Raccolta*, Nos. 245 to 250, and 254, Prayer for Purity.

Scapular of St. Joseph.

The General of the Franciscan Capuchins, in an audience granted to him by Leo XIII., April 18, 1893, received from His Holiness the faculty for blessing St. Joseph's Scapular and delegating the same to others.

Approved form of scapular

The form of the Scapular, as approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, April 18, 1893, is as follows : The two squares of stuff are made of *violet* woollen material, connected in the usual way by *white* strings, and to each of the violet squares is sewn another piece of *yellow* woollen stuff of equal size. The *yellow* square, corresponding to the wearer's breast, has a picture of St. Joseph holding the Child Jesus in his arms, and with a lily in his left hand. Underneath the picture is inscribed : " St. Joseph, Protector of the Church, pray for us !" The other *yellow* square, corresponding to the shoulders of the wearer, has a Papal tiara, over which is an emblem of the Holy Ghost, and over that, again, a cross and two keys, with the inscription : " The spirit of the Lord is his guide."

Strings must be white.

Just as in the case of the Scapular of the Passion, the strings *must* be *red*, so those of the present one *must* be *white*. Hence to gain the Indulgences, the wearer of *both* these Scapulars will have to use two pairs of strings—one red and the other pair white. In other respects the Scapular of St. Joseph follows the general rules for Scapulars and pious objects. It does not involve enrolment in any Confraternity, nor are any practices of devotion obligatory.

Objects of the practice.

The ends proposed are : (1) To honour St. Joseph as the Protector of Holy Church ; (2) to obtain a horror of sin, and the grace faithfully to fulfil the duties of one's state of life ; (3) to place

the whole body of the Church, and himself in particular, under the special protection of St. Joseph in all the needs of life, and particularly at the hour of death.

The "Agnus Dei."

This pious object and sacramental stands by itself. It is entitled to honourable mention if for no other reason than that, during the bitter persecution of our English Catholic forefathers, its possession seems to have been regarded as a representative form of "Popish superstition." It is constantly mentioned in the heretical writings of those times. The blessing of *Agnus Deis* appears to date from earlier than the eighth century.

The making.

We take the following description from Beringer :[1] "The blessing of *Agnus Deis* takes place in the first year of each Pope's reign, and then at regular intervals of seven years. They are made out of virgin wax from the bee, very pure and white, in order to symbolize the human nature, free from the slightest taint, assumed by Our Lord, solely through the operation of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Immaculate Virgin Mary. This wax must previously have formed part of a Paschal Candle burnt in the church. Accordingly, not only is the wax taken from the one burnt in the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican, but also from those used in the other Basilicas and churches of Rome. The image of the lamb is impressed on the wax, as a symbol of the Lamb of God without spot Who was sacrificed on the Cross for man's redemption."

Rite of blessing.

In giving the blessing, the Pope uses water—an element chosen by God, in the Old and in the New Testament, for working numerous wonders—which he mixes with balm and holy chrism,

[1] Vol. i., pp. 572, 573.

and while dipping the *Agnus Deis* in this mixture, offers supplication to God that He will vouchsafe to bless, sanctify, and consecrate them, and impart to the faithful, who use the same with lively and sincere faith, the following graces :

Graces attached.

1. That the sight or contact of the Lamb represented on the wax may excite the hearts of the faithful to contemplate the mysteries of our Redemption, move them to thank, bless, and adore the Divine Goodness, and in this way procure for themselves pardon of their sins.

2. That the sign of the Cross imprinted on these wax medals may ward off from them evil spirits and the fury of the elements.

3. That they may escape from the snares and temptations of Satan in virtue of the Divine blessing.

4. That those in childbirth may be preserved from all untoward accident, and realize a happy delivery.

5. That sicknesses and hurt from fire or water may be kept aloof from good Christians.

6. Lastly, that the protection of God may be assured to them in prosperity and adversity ; and that through the mysteries of the Life and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, they may be saved from a sudden and unprovided death,[1] from all dangers, and every evil.

[1] "And unprovided." The Church, here and in her Litanies, does not pray against a death that is merely "sudden" and unexpected—which may be a mercy in disguise—but against one that is also "unprovided"—that is to say, for which her children are spiritually *unprepared*—through being at the time out of God's grace and friendship. The occurrence of a Catholic's death before last Sacraments can be administered is, of itself, no proof whatever that the death has been an "unprovided" or unhappy one.

CHAPTER XIX

PIOUS SOCIETIES: CONFRATERNITIES, SODALITIES, AND ASSOCIATIONS

The strength of union.

THE Catholic Church has ever understood the utility of banding her children into corporations for the pursuit of religious ends. The principle that "union begets strength," in the affairs of the spirit as well as in earthly ones, is powerfully illustrated by the numberless associations which have arisen among the faithful under ecclesiastical sanction throughout the centuries of the Church's existence.

Societies innumerable.

It would be impossible to give here even a brief list, still less a brief account, of all the various forms of corporate religious activity offered to the choice of Catholics. Father Beringer gives no less than over eighty religious associations of one kind or another, and these do not include the numerous purely local or diocesan societies.[1] In view of such a multitude, one need hardly insist further than has been done in an earlier chapter upon the inexpediency of seeking to join them all, seeing that the thing is humanly impossible. When the convert has become fairly acclimatized in the Faith, it will be time enough to look round and see which of the many recommend themselves to his spirit of devotion and zeal.

Definition of.

All these religious organizations may be com-

[1] Nor do they include all those various organizations for "social action," so *vitally* important in our day.

prised under a single definition as "Free Associations among the Faithful established and directed by ecclesiastical authority, having for their aim Christian piety or charity."

The *form* of the piety, or of the charity—whether corporal or spiritual—is often very different, and these differences give to religious associations their distinctive characters.

"Confraternities."

But there is a further distinction to be drawn. "Confraternities," strictly so called, are marked off from other pious associations, or "pious unions," in this respect—that they are not simply *sanctioned* by ecclesiastical authority, but have besides to be "canonically erected"—that is to say, instituted with greater formality by ecclesiastical authority, and in connection with some particular church, which, as it were, forms their home or centre. A Confraternity is more absolutely under the surveillance of authority, is more bound by fixed rules, has to meet for the purpose of fulfilling certain duties in common, and has a defined status in the sight of ecclesiastical law.

There are also some Confraternities which are under less minute regulation, but still preserve the main features of a Confraternity properly so called.

Pious Unions.

Apart from the above, there are Pious Associations and unions of various kinds which have no canonical status, but are simply approved, enriched with grants of Indulgences and privileges, and watched over by authority. They impose no sort of religious rule of life, oblige to no meetings, and are not confined to any particular church, though, of course, when, and as long as, they are established in any church or mission, the latter becomes a local centre of the work. The Apostleship of Prayer will serve as an instance of a pious association, or league, which is approved by authority, richly indulgenced, but is not a Confraternity. The associates are bound by no special

rules, they do not *necessarily* meet together, and although their association is established in thousands of churches and religious houses all over the world, it is not attached to any one church as to its head-centre.

If, let us suppose, all the members of a Confraternity fell away, the canonical erection received would still keep the institution in being, the Indulgences would still exist, so that at any time fresh members could rally round it again. Whereas, if the same thing were to happen to the Apostleship, there would be nothing left, and a renewal of the approbation and privileges would have to be obtained if it were restarted. In other words, an association is much more essentially bound up with the persons composing it than a canonically erected Confraternity.

Advantage over Confraternities.

But while pious associations, leagues, unions, etc., have, in the respects just mentioned, a lower status in the eye of Church law, they have certain practical advantages over the Confraternity. Being less trammelled by laws and regulations, they have freer scope for diffusion and action. They are, so to say, more manageable, and more easily adapted to local circumstances and needs.

But while we are dealing with all these generalities, my convert reader may be thinking : But when am I to come in ?

The convert and associations.

You are not forgotten, dear reader. Subject to the caution previously given against rushing headlong into optional pieties, one would strongly recommend you to belong to some association, or guild, or Confraternity. There is the spiritual good to be obtained, of course. But that is common to all persons alike, whether they have been Catholics from their infancy, or have received the grace of the true Faith later on in life. The special profit accruing to the convert from membership with some such pious corporation is that

the sense of *solitariness* will be removed. You will no longer feel like a tiny drop utterly merged in the ocean of a world-wide Catholicity. You will feel that you are taking your special part in the life and spiritual activity of the Church. Then, if you join a guild or Confraternity, or other association, which, whether by rule, or for greater efficiency, holds meetings (apart from church services), you will be able to make Catholic acquaintances—which it is desirable for every convert to do.

Choice of.

Your choice of religious societies will probably be much limited by circumstances, whether of your occupation in life, or of the locality in which you are forced to live. Where there is only one church within reach, and that, perhaps, some struggling little country mission, the sphere of selection will be small, since, obviously, associations cannot be multiplied beyond measure in one and the same small congregation without introducing confusion, conflict, and hence weakness. Moreover, a mission may be so small as to lack number sufficient for effective organization. In larger towns and cities your opportunities will be fuller. In your choice of associations, it would be well to combine at least one which is devoted to *charitable* or *social* work.[1]

As already stated, a review of all the possible religious societies would be out of the question here ; so one must be content to select those more commonly to be found in operation amongst us.

Archconfraternity of the Sacred Heart.

The term *Arch*confraternity, as distinguished from Confraternity, implies that the association

[1] See the current *Catholic Social Year Book*, issued by the Catholic Social Guild, Oxford.

thus designed is the *head* association of its kind, having power to aggregate to itself other branches.

Two institutions in honour of Sacred Heart.

The two pious institutions about to be explained are forms of Catholic devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Divine Lord; hence, a few words on devotion to the Sacred Heart will not be out of place.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart.[1]

Devotion to Sacred Heart.

A "devotion" means the singling out for special worship of some Christian truth, or of some particular aspect of the same, the term "worship" being used here in its general sense, so as to include that due to Our Lady, or to the Saints, as well as the essentially higher form which is reserved to God alone, or *Divine* worship, technically called "*latria*."

The Sacred Humanity which the Eternal Word mercifully assumed for our salvation, on account of its intimate and irrevocable union with that Divine Person, is entitled to Divine worship, as forming part of the God-Man. "And, again, when He bringeth in the First-Begotten into the world, He saith: 'And let all the Angels of God adore Him.'"[2] And what may be said of that adorable Humanity considered as a whole and as united to the Person of the World may be equally said of every portion of it, and hence of that Heart of flesh which It includes. As we adore the Sacred Humanity as a whole, viewing it as the Humanity of God, so we may adore that part of it, the Holy Heart of Christ, considered as a part of that same Humanity; for it is the Heart of God. This truth results necessarily from a right

[1] For a fuller account, see the excellent work on this subject by the late Oratorian Father, J. Dalgairns; also, the booklet, *The Worship of the Divine Heart.* *Messenger* Office, Wimbledon.

[2] Heb. i. 6.

understanding of the mystery of the Incarnation. Indeed, we may say that devotion to the Sacred Heart is a safeguard against several heretical conceptions of that fundamental truth of Christianity. Notably, it shuts out that Nestorian view of the Incarnation which, however unconsciously, taints the belief of so many who believe Christ to be God, but profess Christianity outside the Catholic Church.

Material and Formal object.

In every form of Catholic devotion there is the *thing venerated*, and there is the *reason* or *motive* for that veneration. Thus, in devotion to the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, the thing towards which our cult directs itself is that wonderful prerogative of Mary, by which she was conceived into this world without the stain of Original Sin. The *reasons* or *motives* for so directing our devotion are to thank God with her for so singular a favour, and to honour her Divine Son, for the sake of Whose Infinite Sanctity His Mother was made spotless. So, in devotion to the Sacred Heart, the thing worshipped with *latria* is the Human Heart that beats in the breast of Jesus, considered as united—together with the rest of the Sacred Humanity—to the Divine Person of the Son ; and the *reason* or *motive* for specially concentrating our worship on that Heart is the very obvious one of Its great love for us. He "*loved* me, and delivered Himself up for me."[1]

Solid devotion.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart sprang from the deeper realization of Our Lord's love for men, of the greatness of which love He spoke to His chosen servant, Margaret Mary Alacoque, complaining of the small return of love which men gave Him for it, especially in their treatment of the Sacrament of His love, the Holy Eucharist. Devotion to the Sacred Heart has its motive fixed by the complaint of that Heart itself—namely, that of making a return to It of love

[1] Gal. ii. 20.

for love. Needless to say, this love is not to stop at mere prayers and external acts of piety, but should extend to avoiding sin which has spurned the love of Christ, to the overcoming of evil passions, and striving to "put on the Lord Jesus" by an imitation at a distance of the perfect virtues of His most holy Heart.

For spreading this devotion, the Church has, amongst other innumerable measures, approved of various pious associations, the object of which is to band Catholics together in the cult of the Sacred Heart of her Divine Founder and Spouse.

To return now to the Archconfraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The Archconfraternity.

During the lifetime of Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, to whom Our Lord committed the task of spreading devotion to His Heart among the faithful,[1] several Confraternities were set on foot, notably through the efforts of Blessed John Eudes. But these were for *combined* devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Origin.

After Margaret Mary's death (1690), Confraternities exclusively dedicated to the Sacred Heart began to spring up, enriched with Indulgences by the Pope—*e.g.*, at Vienna, in the Church of the Ursulines, in 1697-98. By the year 1764 as many as 1,000 and more briefs of erection had been granted.

It was in the year 1729 that Père Gallifet, S.J., an ardent apostle of the Sacred Heart, published at Rome his classic work "On Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus," and though neither he nor—as some once thought—St. Leonard of Port Maurice was the founder of the Roman Archconfraternity, there can be little doubt but that the

[1] The devotion had existed among Saints and in the cloister many centuries earlier. See, for instance, the Carthusian devotions to the Sacred Heart in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, and, still earlier, the writings of St. Bernard and St. Gertrude.

appearance of the said work was the cause of its being established, as it was three years later, by Clement XII., March 7, 1732, at the Church of St. Theodore. But the centre of this work was afterwards transferred by Pius VII. to St. Mary's "at the Pine," where Father Felici, S.J., had started the pious association of St. Paul for priests, and also a Confraternity of the Sacred Heart for seamen, one hundred and fifty of whom took a vow not to profane the Name of God. This Confraternity was erected into an Archconfraternity by the same Pope in 1803, and Leo XII. afterwards gave it a more central home in the Eternal City at Santa Maria de la Pace, its present headquarters. It is under the management of the priestly association of St. Paul. As the number of affiliated Confraternities multiplied — they reached ten thousand—other Archconfraternities, established in France at Paray-le-Monial and Moulins, relieved the pressure. The primitive Archconfraternity still survives at St. Theodore's, Rome ; but its members are male only, and are pledged to certain penitential and charitable exercises. The Archconfraternity we are here speaking of admits *both* sexes, and the duties it prescribes are confined to devotions and the cultivation of virtue.

Practices.

Practices of the Archconfraternity.—To those who have received a certificate of enrolment from some priest entitled to give it (every properly appointed Director of the *Apostleship of Prayer* has this power), the following practices are assigned : (1) To celebrate annually the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus[1] with great devotion, and, unless prevented, to receive the Sacraments on that occasion. (2) They will strive to approach the Sacraments *at least* once a month, and this,

[1] *I.e.*, the day (Friday) after the octave of Corpus Christi. It is sometimes solemnized on the Sunday after that octave.

as far as possible, on the First Friday or First Sunday of the month; and they will endeavour to assist at public devotions in honour of the Sacred Heart held during the course of the year; and also pray frequently for their fellow associates living and dead.

What the Indulgences require.

N.B.—The above points are *not* necessary for gaining the Indulgences. The following one, however, is—for gaining a good many of the Indulgences: (3) They must recite daily one *Pater*, *Ave*, and *Credo*, adding the invocation: "Sweet Heart of Jesus, grant that I may love Thee daily more and more!" Many Plenary Indulgences are offered, which will be found on the certificates.

Plenary Indulgences.

The following among them require that the prayers mentioned under No. 3 be recited daily: A Plenary Indulgence on the *three* usual conditions (Confession, Communion, and prayers for the Pope's Intentions) may be gained on the following occasions: the day of enrolment in the Archconfraternity, the feast of the Sacred Heart, the First Friday or Sunday of each month, and on one day a month at the member's choice; a Plenary Indulgence at the hour of death if, with a contrite heart, the Name of Jesus be invoked, at least in the heart, should it be impossible to do so with the lips. *Partial Indulgences: seven years and seven quarantines* on each of the four Sundays immediately preceding the feast of the Sacred Heart; sixty days for every good work performed.

Other Indulgences.

Besides, there are quite as many other Indulgences which do *not* require the member to say the *prayers named under No.* 3. But, of course, *the acts prescribed in each case for gaining them* must be fulfilled.

All the Indulgences may be applied to the souls in Purgatory.

The Apostleship of Prayer.

Spirit of the Apostleship.

As a brief explanation of the idea embodied in this pious association, we may take the following from Beringer: "Jesus Christ, our One Mediator and High Priest, is 'ever living to make intercession for us.'[1] By this uninterrupted life of prayer in Heaven and on our altars Jesus unceasingly pleads for the salvation of souls, the conversion of sinners, the preservation of the innocent, the strengthening of the just, the safety of the Church—in one word, for the preservation and extension of the kingdom of God on earth. Now, the work assigned to associates of the Apostleship of Prayer is to make their own the mighty interests of the Son of God made man, and, *uniting themselves with that Heart and following Its example*, to offer up *the prayers, actions, and sufferings of each day for their furtherance*. Thus understood, this Apostolic intercession becomes one of the best and most perfect ways in which to practise devotion to the Sacred Heart."

Origin.

The notion of the Apostleship was first adopted in 1844 by the religious students of the Society of Jesus at Vals, in the French diocese of Puy. Its adaptability to others besides religious was evident. It was soon approved by Pius IX., who enriched it with Indulgences; and under that Pontiff's reign and that of his successor, Leo XIII., the work developed with remarkable rapidity. In 1903 it comprised sixty thousand centres, parishes, and communities, with a membership of some *twenty millions*, at a moderate computation. Not to mention the labours of many friends of the Sacred Heart—priests, missionaries, and zealous lay promoters—the success obtained has been

[1] Heb. vii. 24.

largely due to the circulation of the monthly organ of the Apostleship, *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, which has some thirty-five editions in twenty-one different languages. In some countries there is a supplementary publication, like *The Little Messenger of the Heart of Mary* in France.

Not a Confraternity.

Not being technically a "Confraternity," the Apostleship of Prayer, in union with the Sacred Heart, adapts itself to the varied circumstances of human life. It is *particularly* suited to those who complain that they have little time for praying or church-going, for the *sole* duty of membership is daily to make the "Morning Offering," to the following effect: "O Jesus, through the most pure heart of Mary, I offer to Thee the prayers, work, and sufferings of this day for the intentions of Thy Divine Heart in Holy Mass." N.B.—No precise words are fixed, and it is even enough to pray *in one's heart in the above sense.*

By means of this offering, unless retracted by sin, all our acts during the day, including such as are not in themselves of a religious or spiritual character—such as our meals, for instance—are invested with a supernatural, and hence *intercessory*, or "praying" power.[1]

Degrees.

There are Three Degrees in the Apostleship, no one, however, being obliged to go beyond the First, which consists of those who simply make the daily "Morning Offering," and no more. This may be called the Degree of "simple but active membership." The Second Degree *adds* the daily recital of one decade of the Rosary (which may be said without beads or meditation of mysteries) —these prayers to be offered for the special *monthly intention*, which is fixed by the Pope through the Director-General of the Apostleship. It is not necessary to know what the precise

[1] See 1 Cor. x. 31; Col. ii. 17.

intention is, provided the prayers be offered for it. The Third Degree, which is independent of the Second, but, like the latter, supposes the possession of the First Degree, consists of those members who undertake by *fixed arrangement* to receive Communion in the spirit of *atonement* to the Heart of Our Lord for the outrages committed against It, on a *fixed day,* either in each week or in each month. Thus, a perpetual round of weekly or monthly Communions of Atonement is maintained from one end of the year to the other.

Besides this unbroken series of Communions, there is proposed to *all degrees* a General Communion of Atonement to be made in common on some one day in each month—either that suggested in the monthly calendar of the Apostleship, which is very frequently posted up in churches, or on some other day at the choice of the local director of the association. Communion of Atonement.

It is usual, though not obligatory, for members to wear about them a badge of the Sacred Heart —the Apostleship one—and it is *customary* to have it previously blessed.[1] The Badge.

According to the present arrangements, each diocese has a Director of the Apostleship, from whom, or from some local Director, or lay Promoter, further information may be obtained. Those living in England can apply to *Messenger* Office, Wimbledon, where a leaflet, "Short Explanation of the Apostleship," may be had. How to obtain information.

Essential Conditions for Enrolment.—(1) To receive from an authorized person (a Director or a lay Promoter) a *certificate* of membership, on which the name of the candidate and the date of admission is to be filled in. (This may lawfully be done by the candidate.) (2) To have one's name actually *inscribed* in an official register of Enrolment.

[1] See p. 265, *n.* 2.

the Apostleship, which is kept wherever the Apostleship has been established in due form. If there be no such local centre of the work near at hand, the certificate can be obtained and the registration effected at any church where the Apostleship exists.

The Messenger.

The organ of the Apostleship, invariably called in all countries *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, is much recommended as a means for maintaining the fervour of the associates. The English *Messenger* has for its supplementary publication the *Stella Maria*. Both organs are published at the *Messenger* Office, Wimbledon.

Congregations in Honour of Our Lady.

Spiritual Guilds of Our Lady.

We will consider here only those associations in honour of Mary which are mainly or solely devoted to the *spiritual* benefit of their members. Such institutions, therefore, as the famous Catholic Guilds of Preston, Lancashire—the continuators of the ancient Catholic trades-guilds of pre-Reformation England—do not fall within our present scope, although full of interest and partly devoted to the spiritual benefit of those belonging to them.[1]

Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary.

Origin.

The first Confraternities of the Most Holy Rosary of which there appears to be incontestable documentary proof belong to the second half of the fifteenth century.[2] A very famous one was that founded at Cologne in 1475 by Father James Sprenger, Prior of the Dominicans

[1] See the interesting paper on the Guilds of Preston presented at the Eucharistic Congress of Westminster, 1908, by the Very Rev. Canon Cosgrave, Rector of St. Augustine's, Preston.

[2] Beringer, vol. ii., p. 217, quoting Esser, O.P.

in that city. It soon acquired a very numerous membership in Germany.[1]

Rosary Indulgences obtainable independently.

For fear of confusion, it must be stated that membership with this world-wide Confraternity is not necessary for obtaining Indulgences by reciting the Rosary. Even the special Indulgences which the Dominican Fathers have power to attach to beads blessed by them do not entail joining the Confraternity.

Papal approval.

Besides many other Popes, Leo XIII. specially recommended the Confraternity to the faithful (Encyclical, Sept. 8, 1893); and in 1898 (Oct. 2) he issued his Apostolic Constitution *Ubi primum*, renewing and finally fixing its statutes, rights, and privileges.

Nature of organization.

This is a Confraternity in the strict sense, and not an *Arch*confraternity, with power to aggregate other subordinate Confraternities. For every new erection a diploma must be obtained from the Master-General of the Dominican Order, or from some authority in the same having power delegated to him for the purpose. Members can be enrolled wherever the Confraternity is established. This will naturally be the case in Dominican Churches.

Sole duty of members.

The only duty of the members is to recite *once a week* the *fifteen* decades of the Rosary, meditating in turn on each of the fifteen mysteries.[2]

Indulgences, etc.

The Indulgences and Privileges are extremely rich and very numerous—far too much so for our space to admit f their enumeration.

[1] To this day the strong hold which the devotion of the Holy Rosary has upon the Germans is seen in the large bodies of men who recite the Rosary aloud so devoutly during processions—*e.g.*, at the splendid procession of the Blessed Sacrament through the Rhenish capital on Corpus Christi Day.

[2] See p. 245.

The Roman Sodality.

Origin.

Our business here is with the First Sodality of Our Lady, established in the second half of the sixteenth century at Rome. It took its rise, according to Beringer, in the zeal of a young Belgian priest of the Society of Jesus, Father Jean Leunis—sometimes called Leonius, Leonis, or Leon. He was a Professor of Grammar at the Roman College,[1] and in 1563 he began to gather his more pious scholars in meetings after school hours, and on Sundays and festivals, when special exercises were performed in Our Lady's honour, consisting of spiritual reading, prayers, and a fervent exhortation to devotion to Our Lord's Holy Mother. By degrees the students of other classes gathered round, and the work began to consolidate itself. In the following year, seventy of the youths placed themselves in this way under the special protection of the Blessed Virgin, and rules were drawn up for the Sodalists, for advancing them in Christian virtue. The twofold end proposed to them was progress both in piety and in their studies. The means used were Daily Mass, Weekly Confession, Communion once a month at least, which was exceptional frequency in those days, when, as St. Ignatius testifies, one Communion a year at Easter was almost the universal maximum. The Sodalists also prac-

[1] Father Leunis had previously taught in a Sicilian college of the Society of Jesus, in succession to Father Sebastian Carrabassi, who himself had adopted the practice of assembling the more devout among his scholars on Saturday afternoons for special devotions in honour of Our Lady. Leunis continued this good work till summoned to Rome. Some twenty years before—as we read in Rev. Elder Mullan's, S.J., *Book of the Children of Mary*—Father Nadal had written to St. Ignatius about a pious association for women which he had started for the visitation of prisoners, and it appears probable that this society was dedicated to Mary. If so, it was the first of this kind.

tised meditation when the school work was over, and after attending Vespers on Sunday they would visit the sick in the hospitals.

Before the Sodality had been formally approved by the Holy See, it had already spread to other countries, producing wonderful fruit among Catholic youth amid the ravages of the Reformation. St. Francis de Sales was one of these earlier Sodalists, and filled in turn the offices of Assistant and Prefect of the branch to which he belonged.

Papal sanction

At the petition of Father Claudio Aquaviva, General of the Society of Jesus, Pope Gregory XIII. approved of the Marian Sodality in his Bull "Omnipotentis Dei," of Dec. 5, 1584, and the Roman Sodality was erected under the title of the Annunciation as the central congregation, technically called "the Prima-Primaria." Its rights, exemptions, Indulgences, and Privileges were cofirmed and extended by succeeding Popes, notably by Benedict XIV., in his Bull, called "Golden," *Gloriosæ Dominæ* (1748), where that great Pontiff recalls the benefits he had himself received as a Sodalist in his youth.

A fruitful mother.

The "Prima-Primaria" Sodality of Mary has become the fruitful mother of countless Sodalities, guilds, and associations throughout the Catholic world, and the list of Saints and holy men in every walk of life who received their first inspiration to higher things in her bosom would be a very long one. Not to mention Popes and Princes, the roll of the Sodality includes the names of St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Charles Borromeo, the three youthful Jesuit Saints—Aloysius, Stanislaus, and Berchmans—St. Vincent de Paul, M. Olier, and many others, who have left a great and indelible mark upon the history of the Catholic Church.

Affiliation.

The right of affiliating other religious associations to the Primary Sodality, and so communicating the Indulgences and Privileges belonging to it, resides in the General of the Society of Jesus, to whom application has always to be made. Such branches have to adopt some title of Our Lady, though the name of a patron Saint may be added. In fact, affiliated guilds of boys, girls, and others, are perhaps more generally known by the name of the additional patron, being called, *e.g.*, the Guild of St. Aloysius, of St. Agnes, etc.

The object of all these associations is to help and confirm their members in the practice of a higher Christian life by encouraging the necessary means thereto—prayer, instruction, and regular use of the Sacraments, especially that of the Holy Eucharist.

No extra prayers are of obligation. But it would be a half-hearted member indeed that did not strive daily to practise some little devotion towards the Mother of God and Queen of Heaven, to whose service the Sodalist or the Child of Mary professes to be dedicated in a particular manner. Thus, it is usual to say daily the Chaplet of Our Lady (five decades), or part of her Office, or the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception. Further information as to organization, Indulgences, and Privileges of the Sodality may be obtained from books written for the purpose of supplying it.[1]

[1] For example, *Sodality Manual*, by Rev. Michael Gavin, S.J. (Manresa Press, Roehampton, London, S.W.); *Book of the Children of Mary*, by Rev. E. Mullan, S.J., Kenedy, New York; *Sodality of Our Lady, and Favourite Devotions*, by the Rev. E. Lester, S.J.; *Children of Mary's Sodality Manual*, by a Priest-Director; and *Manual for the Sodality of Our Lady* (*prima primaria*), all published by Burns Oates and Washbourne.

Children of Mary.

Many associations or guilds of Children of Mary are simply affiliations of the Roman "Prima-Primaria," just reviewed. But under the present head we will deal with an entirely separate institution.

Its full title is: "The Association of Children of Mary, under the Immaculate Virgin and St. Agnes." It was founded by Dom A. Passeri, Abbot and Canon Regular of Lateran, and was canonically established at Rome, in the church of St. Agnes-without-the-walls, in 1864. Pius IX. granted it many Indulgences in 1866, and raised it to the rank of a *primary* association, with powers to affiliate other pious societies that might be formed by Bishops in their dioceses, and to communicate the Indulgences and Privileges under certain limitations which need not here be mentioned. Origin.

In the case, therefore, of *girls and young women* whom it is desired to form into an indulgenced guild or union, there is the choice between aggregation to the Prima-Primaria considered in the previous section, or to the present Association, which only admits youthful members of the female sex. Option in affiliation.

This Association demands a probation of at least three months from those seeking membership, during which period they are called "aspirants"—a term also used in guilds for the female sex that are affiliated to the Roman Sodality. If satisfactory, they are received to full membership, or "consecrated." No limit of age is fixed, but a girl must have made her First Communion before being received as a Child of Mary. The insignia for "aspirants" consists of a medal of Our Lady suspended round the neck Constitution.

by a *green* ribbon; the ribbon to the medal of Child of Mary is *sky-blue*. The organization is controlled by a Priest-Director, who is assisted by a female "Superior" and "Vice-Superior" (these may be married women or widows), and also by a President and two Assistants, and some others, to form a Council, who are annually chosen by the votes of the Children of Mary.[1]

Counsel to female converts.

Converts of the female sex would do well to join the Children of Mary Association attached to the church of their district, or perhaps to some Convent near at hand, or, if it be not established in either place, they might seek admission to the nearest association of the kind available. Thus they will not only find help for perseverance in a good Catholic life, but also for developing a true Catholic devotion to the holy Mother of God.

To males.

Men converts, for similar reasons, cannot do better than make use of some guild or Confraternity for their sex.

In larger missions, too, there will often be guilds or associations for boys and youths in their teens, which are invaluable supports in the struggle for virtue and innocence which constantly attends that critical period of the soul's life.

Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Compassion.

(*For the Conversion of England.*)

Conversion of England.

It has been said that no convert to the Faith should go to Heaven without carrying some other converts thither along with him. Zeal for leading others into the Fold is a mark—and, thank God, a commonly witnessed mark—of the true con-

[1] With some modification, female affiliations to the Roman Sodality are similarly organized.

vert.[1] Argument and discussion, when discreetly and opportunely conducted, certainly help, though example helps still more, to sow the seed of the Catholic religion in the hearts of others. But prayer is needed for fructifying it. Often the case is so desperate that prayer becomes the only resource.

Guild of Ransomers.

An appreciation of the efficacy of prayer as a means to bringing about conversions among our non-Catholic fellow-countrymen has led to the establishment of several pious Confraternities or associations for the conversion of England. We are all acquainted with the Guilds of Our Lady of Ransom, established in 1889, and so closely associated with the name of the zealous Father Philip Fletcher, which has its centre at 77, Fleet Street, London, E.C. The Guild has a Welsh branch "of St. Telean," with the conversion of the Principality for its aim and object.

An Arch confraternity.

Five years after the appearance of the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom, another association, the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sea, was inaugurated at the sanctuary of Notre Dame, Boulogne-sur-Mer, *partly* devoted to prayer for the conversion of England.

The Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Compassion, with which we are here concerned, was erected by a brief of Leo XIII., of Aug. 22, 1897, in the church of St. Sulpice, at Paris—a Papal selection seemingly intended as a tribute to the zeal exhibited by M. Olier, the saintly founder of the Sulpicians, for the return of England to the Faith. The power for affiliating other Confraternities is vested by the Holy See in the Superior-General of the Congregation of St. Sulpice.

[1] The charming *Life of* (*Mrs.*) *Eleanor Leslie*, by the late distinguished Catholic authoress, J. M. Stone, affords a striking example of such apostolic influence. Published by the Art and Book Company, London.

A spiritual *entente.*

As many may recall, the inauguration of this Archconfraternity (Oct. 17, 1897), presided over by the late Cardinal Richard, Archbishop of Paris, was attended, in the name of the Catholic Church in England, by the late Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster.

Aim of the Confraternity.

The aim proposed to the members is the obtaining of the conversion of England through prayer and good works, and by the use of any other lawful means suited for forwarding the end in view.

Conditions.

The only obligation and condition for gaining the Indulgences offered is the *daily recital of one "Hail Mary"* for the conversion of England. The special patrons of the association are, besides Our Lady, St. Joseph, St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles and Patron of England, and St. Gregory the Great and St. Augustine—through whom our Anglo-Saxon forefathers received the Catholic Faith.

Recommendation.

Members are also recommended to use the prayer "for our separated brethren" which appears in the Apostolic Letter of Leo XIII., addressed to the English Apr. 15, 1895, beginning with the words: *O Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God*, etc.—the one so commonly recited in England during Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Associations of the Holy Family.

The Family sanctified.

Our Lord came into this lower world to restore Human Society, so terribly corrupted by sin and paganism. This social restoration was to be brought about, not merely by the general efficacy of His redemption upon the Cross, and by the application of the merits of His Blood through the ministry of His Church, but also by the force of His example. He wished to set before men a

perfect model of the *family*, since the family is the social unit ; and if it be perverted, the whole of society, composed of families, will be so, too. Hence, He became an infant for our sakes, and submitted Himself to the weakness and the dependence of childhood, so as to provide, in the home at Nazareth, a bright model of Christian family virtues. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph embody the ideals of Christian parenthood and childhood.

Three organizations.

It is not surprising, then, that the Church should sanction pious associations for uniting families together in the study of the supernatural domestic virtues which shine so brilliantly in the holy inmates of the House of Nazareth. Of these associations there are *three :* The Pious Association of Christian Families in honour of the Holy Family of Nazareth ; the Archconfraternity of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph ; and the Archconfraternity of Christian Mothers under the invocation of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours. The last named is, of course, less comprehensive, since it is for *mothers only ;* yet the sanctification of the mother will go far towards elevating the Christian tone of the whole family.

In England.

Apparently, it is to the second of these three organizations that the Confraternities of the Holy Family existing in the Catholic Missions of England are more usually affiliated, when they are affiliated at all ; and if they are not, the members do not benefit by the numerous Indulgences and Privileges granted by the Holy See to these bodies.

Pious Association of Christian Families in Honour of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Origin.

This Association was founded by Father Francoz, S.J., at Lyons, in 1861. When, in 1892, Pope Leo XIII., by his Brief *Neminem fugit*, sanc-

tioned and extended it to the whole Catholic world, he directed that all other pious bodies having a like aim should be aggregated to it. At the same time he declared through the Sacred Congregation of Rites, Feb. 13, 1894, that the Archconfraternity of the Holy Family, a kindred institution under the spiritual care of the Redemptorist Fathers, which had been in existence at Liège since 1845, might continue as heretofore on certain conditions.[1] We shall refer to this organization presently.

Leo XIII. explains the aims.

A passage from the Brief referred to sets forth eloquently the purport and advantages of Holy Family associations :

"Hence God, Who is plenteous in mercy, having determined to accomplish the work of restoration waited for during so many ages, decreed and ordered this work in such manner that it presents to us at the outset the lofty spectacle of a family established by God in which all men may see a most perfect model of domestic society as well as of every virtue and all holiness. . . . And, in truth, fathers of families have in the person of St. Joseph a striking example of watchfulness and fatherly providence ; in Mary, mothers have a faultless model of charity, modesty, submission, and perfect faith ; children possess in Jesus—*Who was subject to Joseph and Mary*—a Divine Example of obedience which they must admire honour, and imitate. Those of noble birth will learn from this family of royal blood how to observe moderation in the midst of prosperity, and bear misfortune with dignity. The rich will learn from it that virtue is more precious than wealth. Working men, and the many who now-

[1] Beringer also notes that any Confraternities *duly erected according to Papal requirements* are exempt from this command, and hence those legitimately affiliated to the Liège Archconfraternity (vol. ii., p. 325).

adays chafe under the poverty and lowliness of their lot, will turn their eyes towards the Holy Family, and understand that their condition gives them more cause for rejoicing than for regret. Like them, the Holy Family has known anxiety for the daily bread."

Individual family sanctified.

The chief feature of the present association seems to be that it makes its centre rather in the private home than in the church—in the family circle rather than in formal meetings of many families under the presidency of the priest—though such gatherings are also recommended for sustaining the fervour of the associates.

This distinctive mark is seen in the practices recommended. Thus, the statutes approved by Rome, after describing the simple mechanism of the Association—placed under the control of the Cardinal Vicar of Rome—state that the consecration of families to the Holy Family may be performed by the priest for each household separately, as well as for several assembled together in the church. Each family is to have a picture of the Holy Family in the house, round which its members are recommended to gather daily in order to recite the triple invocation to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.[1]

Feast of the Holy Family.

The patronal feast of the Association—that of the Holy Family—occurs on the Third Sunday after the Epiphany—in accord with a change made June 14, 1893.

Enrolment.

The office of enrolling belongs to the priest of the parish, and not to the diocesan directors appointed by the Bishop.

Solitary persons and boarders.

Persons who have no real home or family may still be enrolled under the name of some family of their acquaintance, with which they can join in the practices recommended. Those per-

[1] To be found in full, pp. 338, 339.

manently living with a family may be enrolled under the name of the family. But in both cases their names and surnames are to be separately registered.

There are no *obligatory* prayers, but the associates are urged to recite the special Act of Consecration to the Holy Family and to say the Rosary daily *in common*.[1]

A notable privilege.

The Indulgences, both Plenary and Partial, are many. Members enjoy, moreover, a very exceptional privilege — namely, that any altar whatever at which Masses are said for deceased members become for the occasion "Privileged Altars."[2]

Archconfraternity of the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

Distinguished from "Association."

The title "Archconfraternity" plainly distinguishes this institution from the preceding one, and in turn the title "Association" is so strictly reserved to the organization last considered that the present one is forbidden by the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites (Feb. 13, 1892) to use the term "Association" in any of its official publications.

Lay originator.

It was a Belgian military officer in the Engineers who, in 1844, first conceived the idea of gathering people under the protection of the Holy Family —at first, young men and poor artisans, whom he sought to strengthen against the attacks of irreligion and corrupt morality.

Under the C. SS. R.

The members placed themselves under the spiritual guidance of the Redemptorist Fathers, and the faculty for aggregating other like Confraternities belongs to the Rector of the Redemptorists at Liège.

[1] See Indulgences granted for reciting the Rosary in common, p. 244. [2] See p. 226.

The members engage to lead good Christian lives, to shun bad company and *bad literature*— how vital a precaution in our times!—and all other occasions of sin. They make a daily offering of their actions to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. A meeting is held once a month for prayer and instruction, followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The Archconfraternity shares in the same privilege as regards Masses for departed members as the *Association* of the Holy Family. It was approved by Pius IX. in 1847. Rules and privileges.

Archconfraternity of Christian Mothers under the Patronage of Our Lady of Dolours.

At the opening of the month of Mary, May, 1850, a small group of devout mothers belonging to the French town of Lille agreed together that they would meet daily in order to pay special devotions to Mary Immaculate, the Mother of Sorrows, and commend their children to her all-powerful intercession. This was the humble beginning of an extensive Confraternity. Père, afterwards Mgr., Theodore Ratisbonne quickly perceived the possibilities for good which the idea of these pious women contained, and procured from Pius IX. a Brief (Mar. 11, 1856), erecting this society into an Archconfraternity. The centre of the work is at the time of writing, and in spite of the ruthless persecution of religious bodies by the Government of the French Republic, the chapel attached to the Convent of Notre Dame de Sion, 61, Rue N. D. des Champs, Paris. A happy thought.

The aim of the Archconfraternity is to sanctify the lives of Christian mothers, and lead them to have recourse to the Sorrowful Mother in their Purpose of the Society.

common trials and anxieties, and thus draw down a blessing upon their families.

Practices. Some short prayers are assigned for daily recital, and, as far as circumstances allow, each member offers one Communion a month for the needs of all the others, and attends the monthly meetings of the members.

Good for Mothers' Meetings. It is evident what spiritual support *Mothers' Meetings* would derive from being properly aggregated to this Archconfraternity.

The Congregation for "A Happy Death."

The full title of this pious association is: "Congregation for a Good Death, in Honour of Jesus dying on the Cross, and of His Sorrowful Mother." It was founded about 1648 by Father Vincent Caraffa, General of the Society of Jesus,[1] and first established at the Gesu, Rome. It is often spoken of as the "Bona Mors" Congregation, or as the "Congregation of the Agony of Our Lord Jesus Christ," and the special devotions drawn up for public or private use are commonly known by the same title.[2] The Congregation was approved and indulgenced by a Brief of Alexander VII., Aug. 21, 1655. Benedict XIII. erected it into an Archconfraternity, and added a number of Indulgences; and Leo XII., Jan. 22, 1827, gave it authority to affiliate other congregations that might be formed in connection with secular or regular churches.

This power resides in the General of the Society of Jesus for the time being, to whom applications have to be made for diplomas of erection.

[1] Caraffa died about a year later, after three years of office, from a disease caught in assisting the famine-stricken people of Rome.

[2] See booklet of these devotions (with music), Manresa Press, Roehampton, London, S.W.; also *Catholic Evening Services*.

The aim of the association is to dispose its members, through devotion to the Passion of Christ and to the Mother of Sorrows, to prepare during life for a holy death. They are also to pray for this grace for others, especially those of the same Confraternity. Works of mercy, visiting the sick, attendance at funerals—to pray for the departed souls—are among the practices proposed to the members. But no particular form of daily devotion is prescribed, nor is necessary for availing oneself of the Indulgences, beyond, of course, the works which may be required for the individual Indulgences. Where the Confraternity is established, it is usual to hold public devotions in the church once a month, at which members should endeavour to assist.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Although not founded by St. Vincent, nor till nearly two centuries after his death, in 1660, this admirable Society is plainly the distant fruit of that spirit of charity and self-sacrifice which radiated throughout France from the tender heart of that great Apostle and Father of the struggling and suffering poor. It derived its origin from the need felt by some earnest Catholic young men of Paris, headed by Frederic Ozanam, to seek support for their faith and morals in devoting themselves to works of mercy towards the poor people living in the slums of the gay French capital.

The aims of the Society.

They naturally chose St. Vincent de Paul as their Patron. The aim they proposed to themselves was far higher than the mere dispensing of alms. Personal visitation and brotherly intercourse with the necessitous toilers was of the very essence of their work. One may say that the distinctive mark of the Society of St. Vincent de

Paul is *self-sacrifice* by personal contact with, and service of, the poor *as a means to the sanctification of its members*, which separates it from all other benevolent organizations for the mere *relief* of the poorer classes.

Nor did these young pioneers confine themselves, pagan-like, to bodily ministrations. Their zeal extended to giving comfort and sympathy to the sufferer, raising his thoughts to higher things, advising, and even instructing in the truths and duties of religion, and providing for the education of orphans. Thus they sought to break down the unfeeling barrier separating the rich and poor, and helped to soften that Socialistic discontent and turbulence which lives upon hatred of those who are more richly endowed with this world's goods.

Rapid spread.

This work, which was destined to obtain a diffusion such as its first organizers could never have anticipated in their wildest dreams, started in a very humble way in 1833. Even within the lifetime of its chief founder, Ozanam, the *conferences*, or local committees of active workers, had been greatly multiplied in Paris, and had been formed in some of the larger towns of France. The work had extended to Rome itself, and only seven years after Ozanam's death the French conferences alone had reached the figure of 1,549. But Christ-like charity could not restrain itself within the narrow limits of one country, nor even of the Christian community. The Mussulman and Christian in Constantinople were included in the wide embrace of the Society, although the social customs of the East placed serious hindrances in the way of house-to-house visitation. When M. Pagès, of Paris, headed a deputation of 1,500 delegates of the Society to Leo XIII. in 1888, he was able to console the Holy Father with his report that there were

already throughout the world more than 4,200 conferences, and that 83,000 represented the actual membership.

In February, 1898, Leo XIII. expressed his lively satisfaction at the rapid spread of the work in England, according special praise to the Society's organizations for the benefit of the labouring classes.

Organization.

Constitution of the Society.—Membership is reserved for *men only*. In the beginning, as we have seen, the Society was for *young* men; and though young men are still specially desired for recruits, and it is they who probably still derive most spiritual benefit from membership, yet—in its actual organization—the Society welcomes men of all ages who are suitable for its work. The Brothers are divided into groups, or "Conferences," which are commonly called after the parish to which they are attached. In towns and cities, where there are often several conferences, these are connected together by means of a Particular Council, in addition to which there are Central Councils embracing two or more Particular Councils, or else serving for a diocese, and a Superior Council for the whole country. Each conference has its own president, one or more vice-presidents, a secretary, and a treasurer. There is also a General Council of the whole Society, whose headquarters are at Paris (Rue Furstenberg, 6), to which any application for the establishment of a new Conference has to be referred, accompanied by the observations of the Superior Council, if one exist in the country whence the application proceeds. If the General Council accepts the new Conference, the latter is thereby aggregated to the Society, and begins thenceforth to enjoy all the Indulgences and Privileges granted by the Holy See. The Conferences meet weekly to discuss the cases they

are visiting and the management of their various works of charity.

Honorary members and others.

So far we have spoken only of the *active* members. Besides, there are *correspondents*—members who live in places where no Conference exists, and who help on the work according to their opportunities; *honorary* members, who do not attend the ordinary Conferences, but are invited to the extraordinary, or "quarterly" meetings, and who make annual offerings to the Society. They are received into the Society in the same way as other members.

How women can help.

Lastly, there are non-member *subscribers*, or *benefactors*, who help by means of alms and prayers. Women may belong to this class, and special Indulgences are offered to them.

We have here a pious association which opens out a grand field for the charitable co-operation of converts of either sex. "Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day."[1]

Female societies.

Similar charitable organizations exist for women, such as the Society of St. Elizabeth, and the Ladies of Charity, the latter being the first enterprise of the kind started by St. Vincent. Women living in the world, by taking part in such societies, give a portion of their time to the service of the poor and afflicted, while the Sisters of Charity—founded later than the Ladies of Charity—consecrate their lives under vow to the same work, but in more varied forms.

The Third Order of St. Francis for Secular Persons.[2]

Not an ordinary Confraternity.

This religious body, while belonging to the general category of Confraternities, stands on a higher plane than the rest. In an audience

[1] Ps. xl. 2. [2] Including secular priests.

granted by Leo XIII. to the Superiors-General of the Franciscan Order, His Holiness said: "Some people think that by force of the Constitution, *Misericors Dei Filius*, the Third Order has been reduced to a simple Confraternity, or Sodality. Such is not Our intention; but, as We have already declared, its essence and nature have been maintained; it is not a mere Confraternity, but a true Order." Evidently this does not mean that lay Tertiaries form a religious Order in the strict sense of the term, for that would involve the taking of the three substantial vows of religion —of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. The meaning of the Holy Father's declaration must, therefore, be understood according to the explanation of Benedict XII.—namely, that the Third Order has certain points in common with religious Orders by which it is distinguished from other lay Confraternities similarly composed of people living in the world—namely, a fixed rule approved by the Holy See, a noviciate, a profession, and a distinctive habit.

Habit. Every Tertiary has to wear (invisibly) a scapular of ashen-grey, or brown, or black, woollen cloth, and a knotted waist-cord. The scapular may either be of such a size as to reach to the waist and be checked by the cord, or it may, by present custom, be no larger than any of the ordinary scapulars used by the faithful.

Noviciate. The noviciate—which, of course, does not involve entering any monastery or convent, nor suspending daily avocations—must last a year, and this term may not be shortened, except in danger of death. It is not broken by omitting to wear the scapular or the cord, even in the absence of any dispensation to that effect.

Rules and counsels. The main points of observance are fasting on the eves of the feasts of the Immaculate Conception and of St. Francis—it is *recommended* that

the ancient usage be followed of *fasting* every Friday, or of abstaining from flesh meat on Wednesdays—Confession and Communion once a month.[1] The Tertiary is to say daily twelve *Paters* and twelve *Aves;* priest Tertiaries, as having to recite the Divine Office daily, are not bound to these prayers.

Indulgences and Privileges.

The Indulgences and Privileges accorded to Tertiaries are great and numerous. The power to receive members belongs to the head Superiors of the Franciscan First (Male) Order, or to such Franciscans or other priests as have been deputed by them.

[1] After the Decree of Pius X., "On Daily Communion," this rule expresses the *minimum*, and not the desirable *maximum*, of frequency as regards receiving the Holy Eucharist.

CHAPTER XX

AIDS TO A DEVOUT LIFE

Traffic for Heaven.

It is time now to turn our attention to the various means offered us by the Catholic religion for *making progress* in the spiritual life. No convert should be content to receive from the Master the talent of the True Faith, and then bury it in a napkin, instead of trafficking with it and putting it out at interest until He come again to ask an account of it. Our Lord has planted us in His chosen vineyard, fostered the vine of our soul with constant irrigations of His Precious Blood through the Sacraments of His Church, and expects to find it producing grapes, and not thorns. He has placed us that we "may bear fruit," and "that the fruit may remain," and be lasting.

All called to follow Christ.

A grievous misconception sometimes exists that the more perfect following of Christ is mainly the business of those specially consecrated to His service, either in the ministry or in the cloister. Nothing could be more false. The words of Christ, "Be ye perfect, as My Heavenly Father is perfect," apply to us all, and are to be put in practice by every single Christian—man, woman, and child—*according to the condition of life of each.*

Each in his own state.

To some Our Lord gives a call to a *higher* state of life, such as the ecclesiastical or the religious state. But it is obviously the business

of everyone professing the name of *Christian* to be a *follower of Christ* in his or her own state, or there is no meaning in words. Our very Baptism engages us to this, and at Confirmation we pledged ourselves to be not His followers alone, but His soldiers as well, who should not be content to stay at home, living upon their income, but seek to extend the kingdom of their Divine King, first in their own souls, and then —as far as it may be given them to do—in the souls of others.

Scheme of Chapter XX.

The aids to a devout life are chiefly these: Mental Prayer, Daily Mass, Daily Communion, Particular Examination of Conscience, Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, Spiritual Reading, Union with God in the midst of daily occupations, acts of self-denial and mortification of the senses, and Spiritual Retreats.

Some of these have been touched upon already incidentally in preceding chapters, as far as could be done without specializing—which it is not intended to do in these pages. Thus we shall say no more about Mental Prayer, nor of the advisability of assisting daily at the Holy Sacrifice, when this is possible; and, as regards Daily or Frequent Communion, the reader must be once more referred to publications devoted to that subject.[1]

Visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

The Prisoner of Love.

A "Visit" to the Blessed Sacrament means, in common parlance, going to some church or chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, if only for a very few minutes, in order to pray to Our Lord truly present in the tabernacle upon the Catholic altar. Our Lord, in His incomprehensible love for man, was not content to visit

[1] See list at end of volume.

this world, redeem it, and then withdraw Himself from our midst. Out of the Seven Sacraments He made one which was not simply to contain His precious merits and His grace, but even His very Self, God and Man.

Love alone explains *Real Presence.*

There is no possible explanation of His doing this except that, in spite of their sinfulness and unworthiness, it is His "delight to be with the children of men," who by "the grace of adoption of sons" have been made His brothers and sisters. Rightly, then, do we call this Holy Sacrament the "Sacrament of *Love*," since it is the one wish of those who love to be constantly with the object beloved and to minister to its needs.

Love for love.

St. John gives as the reason for loving God, "Because He hath first loved us." Clearly, then, wishing to be with Him during "Visits" is a good way of *returning* the love which He shows by remaining day and night with us — our "Emmanuel"—the Divine Companion of our exile in this valley of tears. It would be a sad lack of appreciation for His faithful companionship to leave Him alone there, of our own choice, day after day, unadored and unthanked for His unspeakable condescension towards us sinners.

Our need of Eucharist.

Apart from other considerations of a higher and more disinterested order, have we no need of Him? Have we no temptations for which to beg strength, no perplexities for which to seek light, no sorrows for which we need comfort and the grace of resignation to His wise and loving, but often mysterious, Will? Have we no relatives or friends in affliction or danger to commend to the compassion of that most sympathetic and truly *human*—as well as most Divine—Heart? If we are parents, have we no child that causes anxiety? Has the wife nothing to ask for her husband, or the husband for his wife; or have both no

petitions to present for the gladdening of their home? As we sink on our knees before the Friend of Sinners, are there not numberless poor souls on the brink of eternity all round us whose everlasting lot will be sealed for weal or woe ere we leave that Presence? And perhaps in God's decree it is just our poor pleading with the Eucharistic Heart that will earn for them the grace of a death-bed repentance.

Prayer for spiritual pastors.

Then there are the wider interests of Christ's earthly kingdom, the anxieties and sorrows of Our Lord's Vicar, the Pope, with the care of all the churches pressing upon his aged shoulders, the objects of the plots, hatred, derision, and wicked calumnies of the enemies of Christianity. Who has a stronger claim upon our Eucharistic intercessions than the Spiritual Ruler and Father of us all? Then there are the Holy Father's chief advisers in the weighty affairs of the Church; there are the Bishops and priests, whose needs are all the greater in proportion to the heavier and more sacred responsibilities which weigh upon them.

Use of fixed devotions.

After this long, but incomplete, list can there be any need to ask: "But how am I to fill up the time during these private and voluntary visits of love to the Prisoner in the Tabernacle?" For all these heads suggest ample matter for spontaneous prayer, as distinguished from the recital of fixed forms of devotion. Yet it is perfectly good and lawful to use our Prayer-Books (and far better than "mooning" the time away), or to recite our Rosary, or to make the Stations of the Cross. Nothing could well be more pleasing to Our Lord than that we should ponder lovingly over His sufferings for us, nor gratify more the Heart of that Model Human Son than the recital of those glories with which He adorned the best of all human Mothers.

Then there is an abundant supply of published devotions to the Blessed Sacrament, or to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For devotion to the Sacred Heart, although really distinct from devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, is closely allied to it, since it is in that Sacrament of Sacraments that we have a supreme manifestation of that Heart's love for man "to the end," and at the same time a monument and living memorial of all its other loving manifestations, in Bethlehem, Nazareth, in the supper-room, and on Calvary. Devotion to Sacred Heart.

Again, *reparation* and amends to that Heart for the neglect, irreverences, blasphemies, and —alas !—even sacrilegious profanations of which the Adorable Sacrament is too often the object, opens out by itself a large field for occupation to the visitors of Jesus in His tabernacle. Reparation.

Sometimes accidental obstacles stand in the way of such visits. Thus, in a small mission, the priest may have no one to look constantly after his church or chapel in his absences, and so —to secure the safety of the Blessed Sacrament and of his church—he may be compelled to keep the building closed during the week except at service-times. But usually there will be no difficulty in obtaining access by some private entrance if we are known to the priest or to his servant. Closed churches.

What wonderful graces and blessings often flow from these private communings with Our Blessed Lord, in which heart speaks to Heart in peaceful solitude !

Moreover, such visits to the Blessed Sacrament may serve Frequent or Daily Communicants as a means of making up for any unavoidable brevity in preparation for, or thanksgiving after, receiving Holy Communion. As stated elsewhere, there is no law that all our preparatory devotions must be performed in the church, or on the morn-

ing of reception itself. This point is important for those who have to work for their living, and who otherwise might often think it necessary to forego their "Daily Bread" through lack of leisure (or of health) to prolong their Eucharistic devotions as much as they would desire at the actual time of Communion.

Particular Examination of Conscience.

Meaning of term.

Under the heading of "Morning and Night Prayers," we have already adverted to the practice of examining the conscience at the close of each day. That is "general" examination, and it ranges over all faults of whatever kind (of thought, word, deed, or neglect) committed in the twenty-four hours. The "particular" examination—or "examen," as it is sometimes called—forms a special division of the "general," and is concerned with some "particular" fault singled out from the rest for conquest. It is a most efficacious means for eliminating the same from the list of our failings.

How practised.

The method is this: A fault is definitely selected—say, uncharitable talk about others. At the beginning of the day—for example, at Morning Prayers—or, in case of membership with the Apostleship of Prayer—after the "Morning Offering"[1] made on waking or rising, a distinct resolution is formed against committing *that particular fault.* During the day, if I catch myself tripping, I make on the spot a brief act of sorrow. It is also recommended to put one's hand to one's breast, as if striking it, which can (and should) be done so as not to attract notice. If the practice be adopted of making a short midday review of the morning as well as the one at night, the particular fault is examined into first,

[1] See p. 282.

and other faults afterwards, acts of contrition being added. At all events, this is the order to be followed at my night prayers. Those who have more leisure for piety may keep a record or small account-book, noting down the number of falls in the day, adding up at the end of the week, and then comparing week with week and month with month, in each case thanking God for the gains, and asking pardon for the losses.

Various hints.

It is not necessary to continue at the same fault till it has quite vanished. Once it has been reduced to very small proportions it may be changed for a new one. The same plan may be used for acquiring virtues by the performance of their acts. Thus a person given to despondency may resolve to make explicit acts of confidence in God, or to perform acts of mortification if given to sensuality, or acts of charity if given to selfishness. At time of "examen" he will see whether he has neglected the proposed acts. The Particular Examination may also be used to foresee and resolve against occasions of faults expected to occur before the next examination.

A sure remedy.

It would not be too much to say that anyone who adopts this business-like method will infallibly find faults disappearing, or at least greatly diminishing.

Spiritual Reading.

Its advantages.

Here we have a very effective instrument for deepening religious impressions in the soul. To some, spiritual reading may prove even more effectual in this respect than meditation, especially if the reading be done in a recollected and prayerful spirit, and in quiet. In meditation we are more likely to direct our thoughts according to our own wishes; whereas a book is less accommodating, and tells us what it thinks we ought to

know. It is no respecter of persons, and speaks its mind, whether we like it or not.

What to read.

The Best Books.—Needless to say that the inspired Scriptures take precedence of every other reading. (For you have learnt long since the falsehood of the notion that the Bible is a forbidden book for Catholics.) The New Testament is the distinctively *Christian* part of the Bible, and the reading of the Gospels and Epistles cannot be too strongly recommended to every Catholic. Of the Old Testament, the Book of Psalms seems the portion most suited for devotional purposes.

A golden book.

Next to the Scriptures it would be difficult to find a book more full of the spirit of God than the *Imitation of Christ.* The convert should see, however, that he gets the genuine article, and not a "Bowdlerized" edition prepared for non-Catholics.

Spiritual books classified.

Other Books.—Other spiritual books may be divided roughly into *Lives of Saints* or exceptionally holy persons, and *spiritual treatises* on points of the spiritual life.

1. *Saints' Lives.*—It is in the lives of the heroes of holiness that we see the Catholic Faith in its highest development, just as we see military genius displayed in its most brilliant forms in the wars of Napoleon.

There is no clear principle upon which one can restrain the choice of the convert in the matter of Saints' Lives, unless it be in the form of a recommendation to prefer such as are true to history, rather than those which are mainly panegyrics. But one or two hints may be usefully offered.

Are Saints' Lives practical?

One difficulty that may be brought against all such reading is the impossibility of imitating so many of the actions recorded of the Saints; yet clearly the object in reading about the wonderful

things they did for God is that we may be moved to copy these models of holiness. To content ourselves with the dictum that "Saints are to be admired, *but not imitated*" would be to misapply a Bible text, and at the same time forfeit the whole benefit of this class of spiritual reading. On the other side, it would be presumption straightway to transfer their extraordinary acts of virtue bodily into our lives. Nay, some of these acts would not be virtuous in *us*, and were so in them only because done under special inspiration from God. Further, as spiritual writers observe, it does not follow that a Saint was a Saint in every single act that he performed at every stage of his spiritual progress. Saints were not made in a day.

How to apply them.

We must therefore strike a middle course, and use their real virtues as an encouragement to practise them *in kind*, but necessarily upon a lower plane, according to the measure of God's grace accorded to us.[1] For instance, we read that St. Aloysius had such a marvellous gift of prayer that *his* difficulty was to withdraw his mind from Divine contemplation. *Our* difficulty, probably, is the opposite one—how to keep from distractions. An abrupt attempt to imitate his absolute concentration on God would, as likely as not, land us in a lunatic asylum! The lesson, then, for us is to take more care to cut off causes of distraction in prayer, not to omit our prayers, and the like. Again, we read of the frightful tortures endured by Virgin martyrs, even of tender years, like St. Agnes, rather than surrender faith or virtue. It would be the height of imprudence for us to test our own constancy in

[1] For this reason the reading of biographies of exceptionally holy people who are not canonized Saints may often help us more than Saints' Lives. Their degree of holiness seems less beyond our reach, and their failures more like our own.

these points by trying to realize what they suffered, and then asking ourselves whether we would here and now be willing to endure the like rather than offend God. Here the application for us might be not to be ashamed of our faith before others, not to sacrifice its principles for the sake of worldly profit, and to shun everything that might sully chastity, even in thought. That is practical and practicable. We are constantly looking too far afield when seeking for opportunities of pleasing God, and allowing our poetic imagination to wander over all sorts of heroisms, when what He really wants from us is close at hand every day of our lives. We resemble the short-sighted man who looks all over the dinner-table for the salt-cellar, when all the while it is right under his nose! As for more extreme trials of our virtue, if God should send them, He will also send the special graces needed.

Miracles recorded.

Then, again, we read of many wonderful and miraculous incidents in these Lives which sometimes seem to try our powers of belief beyond bearing. What are we to think of them? First of all, it will not do to disbelieve them simply because they are so marvellous. For this would be virtually to deny the possibility of miracles, like the freethinker or rationalist. On this principle, we should be throwing doubt both upon the miracles contained in the Old Testament and on those wrought in confirmation of His Divine mission by Our Lord Himself.

Christ foretold miracles.

It would be ignoring Christ's prophecy: "Amen, amen, I say to you, He that believeth in Me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and *greater than these shall he do*." And again: "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In My name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing,

it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."[1] Those who have read the Lives of Saints will easily remember meeting with these very kinds of miracles. What is there incredible, then, in accounts of miraculous healings of the sick and raisings of the dead, such as we are all familiar with in the Life, for instance, of St. Francis Xavier?

Right view to take.

These events in the Lives of the Saints are not, of course, matters of obligatory faith. Once, like true Catholics, we resist the sceptical first impulse to discredit such supernatural accounts just because they are such, it becomes simply a question of historical *fact*, to be sifted by the laws of evidence. If I see good and solid reason for distrusting the evidence, I am perfectly justified in not accepting the marvel as certain. But it would not be reasonable positively to reject it while knowing little or nothing of the proofs upon which it rests.

Practice of the Church.

That it is perfectly reasonable to withhold absolute belief in alleged miracles for which I have no evidence of any kind is shown by the very rigid examination to which Rome subjects them in her process of Canonization.[2] But it would be rash and wrong for a Catholic to cast doubt on those which have been thus examined by the Church, and recognized by her as genuine.

Ascetical treatises.

2. More caution in choice of books should be observed with regard to *spiritual treatises* and

[1] John xiv. 12; Mark xvi. 17-18.

[2] We see the same spirit of caution in examining the cures at Lourdes. No cure is given out as authentic until it has run the gauntlet of a board of scientific men, some of whom are not even believers. Yet many a marvellous healing has issued triumphantly from this severe ordeal. See accounts by Dr. Duret, English *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, Dec., 1908; Jan., Feb., May, July, Sept., Oct., 1909. *Messenger* Office, Wimbledon, England.

published sermons or conferences. Generally speaking, the confessor's advice should be sought before choosing. Nothing is more calculated to spread confusion in the spiritual life than the indiscriminate reading of spiritual treatises that are unsuited to one's spiritual state or temperament. Thus, the scrupulous person, *whose great need is more confidence in God*, takes to some drastic treatise on the effects and punishments of sin, on demanding a strict account of one's conscience, and distrusting self, or speculations upon the fewness of the elect, etc.! Similarly, the lax person entertains himself with treatises on the pure love of God, on the need of a prudent moderation in penitential exercises, and so forth! The books or treatises, though not infallible, may be excellent in themselves—*i.e.*, if one keeps in view *the times* and *circumstances* and *condition of society* in which they were written, or the ends which their authors proposed to themselves.

But that does not make them suitable for all souls and under all circumstances.

How to read them.

Granting, now, that a book has been prudently selected, there are one or two points to be noted: (1) If you come across something which not only reproaches you for some defect you are aware of, or which has been pointed out to you, but seems to upset all your previous notions about religion, or about your own interior life, *do not act on this "new light," as perhaps you are inclined prematurely to call it, without first seeking advice from your spiritual director*. For it may, after all, be not a light from Heaven, but a "*Lucifer* match."

Two warnings.

Thus you will provide against two possibilities: (*a*) Even if the book bear the "Imprimatur," or approval, of ecclesiastical authority, this does not amount to a voucher for the absolute excellence of every item which that book contains, though

you may, indeed, regard it as a guarantee that there is nothing in the work clearly opposed to Catholic faith or morality. Still less does it follow that everything in the book is suitable or good for you. (*b*) There is also the chance that, through unfamiliarity with technical terms in use among theologians you have taken the staggering passage in a sense not intended by the writer. Thus, on one occasion, a person reading that to perform actions out of mixed motives was a lack of "purity of intention," and being conscious of this defect, rushed to the conclusion that all the punishments threatened in the Bible against the unchaste were hanging over him, and that, of course, the contemplated Communion, on the morrow, must be abandoned, as there would be no opportunity for previous Confession. The same rule may be applied to sermons that we hear. Both the writer and the preacher address the multitude, and not the individual, to whom the teaching given in public often needs to be adapted privately by the spiritual director.

The way to read fruitfully

(2) It is good to make a short prayer—at least, in the heart—before beginning—one to the Holy Ghost, for instance—that we may have light to understand and grace to perform. As to the amount of reading, the best rule is, "Non multa, sed multum"; or, if one may coin a word, "Not much, but *much-ly*." The benefit to be gained does not depend on the *quantity*, but upon mastering the meaning of what little we read, so that it may go well home. If we curiously skim over a chapter or two, as we might some light novel, no great impression will be left. Whereas, if we read slowly and thoughtfully, lifting up our hearts to God from time to time by means of pious aspirations suggested by the matter read, the truths placed before us have a better chance of sinking in and practically influencing our daily life.

This observation applies with double force to the reading of the Scriptures, the meaning of which is more hidden, and, only in a less degree, to the *Imitation of Christ*, which possesses an unusual depth of thought.

If only a quarter of an hour can be spent daily in spiritual reading, it will prove a considerable help. In particular, it will feed the mind with matter for our mental prayer.

Union with God during the Day.

What it means.

The kind of union with God in the midst of our daily duties here meant is no fearfully sublime or mystical flight. It is perhaps best described as the habit of soul resulting from the practice of recalling the presence of God and raising our hearts to Him amid our employments, and going through these with a more or less conscious intention of pleasing Him, instead of in a purely natural way. By this means, while fulfilling our external duties as perfectly as we can, we nevertheless reserve a sacred corner in our hearts for God—a little inner sanctuary, so to say—into which we retire momentarily to worship Him.[1]

An illustration.

The following feature of the private life of the somewhat maligned Philip II. of Spain may serve as an interesting illustration of what we are considering: In the magnificent monastery of "El Escorial," not far from Madrid, which Philip founded, is still to be seen the one solitary apartment which that powerful King seems to have reserved for his private use. So monastic

[1] Short ejaculatory prayers—indulgenced ones for a preference—and "Spiritual Communions", will prove very helpful for the purpose. Thus the mere utterance of the Holy Name "Jesus" has an Indulgence of twenty-five days attached, *as often as we pronounce it in the day*. Leaflets with a number of short aspirations are easily obtained—*e.g.*, *Treasury of Indulgenced Prayers*, Manresa Press, Roehampton, London, S.W.

was its simplicity that a contemporary said of the monarch that "he had gone to the place not to be a King so much as a monk."[1] The authority here quoted explains that this austere chamber was so arranged that the King's bed faced some folding-doors, which led straight into the tribunes of the royal chapel, and that the altar, with its tabernacle for reservation and large crucifix, could be seen at any time in the day through openings in the door-panels. "Hence," the writer adds, "Philip was able to die—as, in fact, he did—with his eyes fixed upon the sacred image of the Redeemer."

A contrast.

Thus, whatever faults may be rightly attributed to Philip II., forgetfulness of God during the day or night does not appear to have been one of them. A marked contrast in life, and especially in death, to that English Queen who was fortunate enough to scatter the finest fleet that the world had yet seen by the aid of her gallant seamen, her loyal, though persecuted, Catholic subjects, and of hurricanes.

Occupations will not suffer.

It would be an error to suppose that the habit of union with God during the day will interfere with proper attention to our daily tasks. On the contrary, the soul that does not pour itself out wholly upon external things, but exercises a certain restraint upon its powers in order to keep God in view, is far more master of its faculties, and is saved from such defects in the transaction of business as often result from flinging oneself into it without self-control. The human instrument derives additional strength from keeping united to the Divine Source from which all power flows, natural as well as supernatural.

Sanctifying trivial actions.

This habit of living in the presence of God makes it easier to put a supernatural *intention*

[1] *History of the Royal Monastery of St. Lawrence, commonly called "the Escorial,"* by Antonio Rotondo.

into the most commonplace actions, to the increase of merit and of our heavenly store. People may complain at times that their lives are made up of an *accumulation of busy nothings*. A purely domestic existence, with its unexciting, monotonous round of household and social trifles, and its lack of any definite work in life, seems to them absolutely aimless. It *can* be, but it *need not*. By purifying—that is to say, supernaturalizing—our intention, a daily routine, apparently aimless from the religious standpoint, may be rendered most precious in the sight of God, and become a means to considerable holiness.

Holy Family our model.

Those who have to minister to the wants of a family may, of course, bustle, fuss, and fume through their household task in a purely human fashion, being driven on day after day by the necessities of the case. But they may also live in the spirit of the House of Nazareth, uniting their actions with those of the Holy Family, and striving to infuse into their duties something of the charity, gentleness, self-forgetfulness, and thought for others which must have beautified the domestic life of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

No extra labour.

What should be specially noticed in this connection is that the cultivation of this supernatural spirit *need add nothing* to the *number* of things to be done: the only change is in the *intention and motives* of our mind in performing that which we have to do *in any case*. Similarly, in social intercourse we are called upon by the rules of good breeding and the conventionalities of life to do many things which in external appearance are not distinguishable from acts of Christian virtue. They are, in fact, the fruits of the influence still exercised by Christianity even upon those sections of society which practically ignore the Gospel of Christ. These things need nothing more for their conversion into *supernatural* and

meritorious acts except a supernatural intention and motive. Why not simply use our free-will to co-operate with Divine grace—ever ready at hand—in order to transform them into heavenly riches ?

Merit from good manners; examples.

To give a few illustrations : It is considered "bad form" — the worldly equivalent for "wrong"—that people should thrust themselves forward, boast about their advantages, depreciate their neighbours' doings—at all events, in public. Instead of shunning these weaknesses merely in order to retain a repute for good manners, or to be liked by others, why not *mean* to avoid them, out of a desire to imitate Our Divine Model, Jesus Christ, Who, Infinite God though He was, humbled Himself, and hid away all the blinding splendour of His perfections beneath the form of a weak and helpless Child, laid in a cattle-shed? Respect for women is another conventionality of civilized society—one, however, which is being seriously imperilled amongst us by the lack of respect *for themselves* increasingly exhibited by many of the sex, both in public and in private. It is one of the safeguards of external morality. Why not practise it with the purifying thought of the Virgin Mother in the mind, whose sanctity and unparalleled dignity has lifted woman out of the degradation to which paganism had consigned her, and to which the modern revival of pagan morality threatens once more to relegate her ? It is considered "the proper thing" for men to sacrifice their own pleasure and personal comfort to the gentler sex. What is this but Christian self-denial in disguise ? It only needs a supernatural motive to convert it into the imitation of Christ and a means of personal sanctification. Similarly, it is "bad form" to lose one's temper and use intemperate language under provocation—at all events,

before company. Self-control may be exercised in the circumstances merely out of a refined pride —to preserve one's dignity before others and to put one's assailant thoroughly in the wrong. But a Christian may do the selfsame thing to imitate the "meek and humble Heart" of Him Who, in the hour of His Passion, became "as a man that heareth not, and that hath no reproofs in His mouth."[1] The Catholic who keeps in touch with God amid his daily occupations will more easily have such motives suggested to him. Our *feelings* may not harmonize with our motives; but, as we saw earlier, merit or demerit depends upon our *will* and *meaning*.

Self-Denial and Mortification.

There are few lives that have not their seasoning of external hardships and bodily distresses. And, certainly, a ready acceptance of these incidental and unsought-for bitters out of a religious motive contributes greatly to our spiritual progress. But these material roughnesses of life have—owing to the rapid advance of material civilization—been reduced in our days to a minimum. Science and Art, working hand in hand, have done their best to eliminate from human existence everything that makes the details of life hard and unpleasant to the carnal man, and to surround him with everything that can soothe and delight his senses. Scientific discovery and mechanical invention have to a wonderful degree mitigated suffering and sickness. It has enhanced the ease and delight of locomotion and travel. It offers much comfort to the mortal body, both in apparel and in other ways. Art also steps in and devises every kind of gratification for every one of the senses. Thus,

[1] Ps. xxxvii. 15.

nowadays anyone fairly well endowed with this world's goods may—under favourable circumstances—escape almost entirely from all that makes man's external life rough and penitential.

Now, let it be distinctly understood that there is no intention here to decry these undoubted boons to humanity, considered in themselves. Nor are they here referred to as only too often used for sinful purposes. They are, like all else below, gifts of a bountiful God, allowed by Him to man for his use, his well-being, and even for his recreation ; and they are every one capable of helping him towards his sole appointed end—the obtaining of Heaven. They become helps to Heaven, not merely by their use, but also by abstinence from using them—either wholly or partially. All this is true. But the practical truth remains that the *total* effect of a wholesale and unlimited use of these external gifts to man's senses tends to foster man's innate sensuality, and to obliterate from the Christian's mind the Gospel of Christ Crucified. And by this is meant, not the Gospel in its higher application to the professed ascetic, to the monk, or nun, but *the substantive Gospel itself*, which, by its repeated teaching, and by the example of Christ which it puts before us, proclaims to everyone alike the necessity of voluntary self-denial in the employment of all these pleasant things. Moreover, at the present time of socialistic philosophies, we should remember that the need of self-denial is by no means confined to those born in wealth and luxury. The self-made man, who has begun to taste the sweets of money, is perhaps more exposed to the allurements of self-indulgence from the very novelty of his condition. The working man, too, may be as self-indulgent over his beer as the millionaire over his choice brand of wine or cigars. A family of mill-hands in

averagely good work may have more spare cash for luxuries suited to his or her taste than many a leisured lady or gentleman with "blue" blood, but limited means. The poorer classes "have the Gospel preached to them," as well as the richer.

Necessity of self-denial.

One may lay it down as an axiom that any Christian will find it difficult even to keep clear of *mortal* sin unless he practise largely the virtue of temperance in the use of things flattering to the senses; and that none will ever make much progress in holy living except he aim higher than mere temperance, and voluntarily deny and penalize himself in much that is in itself perfectly lawful.

The "simple life."

First, we must disabuse ourselves of the fallacy that self-denial is synonymous with *economy* or *simple* living; for the miser is economical, though vicious. Many, too, adopt what is called the "simple" life purely for hygienic reasons, or, again, out of singularity and affectation. This last is *im*mortification.

Purposes of self-denial.

Next, we should notice that the end and object of self-denial or of self-imposed afflictions is to develop supernatural virtue in the soul. The hardship embraced is, therefore, not an end in itself, but, if wisely chosen, only a help to the above end. Two conclusions follow—one teaching us a prudent moderation in the use of these voluntary hardships, and the other showing their importance and utility. Virtue of the heart being the object aimed at, it is the virtue and not the multiplication of mortifying deeds which chiefly matters. On the other side, the study of the Lives of the Saints convinces us that no great holiness is attainable without a certain measure of voluntary self-affliction, whether adopted for complete conquest over lower impulses, or to obtain great graces from God, or from a desire

to be more closely united to the Crucified by suffering—that sure test of love.

Reference to confessor.

The best protection against imprudent extremes or cowardly self-love is to be found in consultation with, and submission to, one's spiritual director.

Kinds of self-denial.

Self-denial and mortification may be either *interior* or *exterior*. Thus, to restrain curiosity is interior mortification, and to abstain from even the temperate use of alcoholic drinks on a Friday in memory of Our Lord's thirst on the Cross would be *exterior* mortification.

Occasions plentiful

A little thought and study of our own daily ways and habits will supply us with a number of suggestions for both classes of mortification, without going the least out of our way, or doing anything that is in itself unusual or apt to attract notice. For example, our love of admiration and attention, our vain self-complacency in accomplishments, words of others calculated to rouse our jealousy and anger, the misunderstanding of our motives by others—what a large field is here for active self-discipline! Then, in our habits of repose, our shirking of effort and the least fatigue, and general daily treatment of our perishable bodies, we shall easily discover many ways of imitating at a distance the mortification of Christ in matters that are in themselves not unlawful. If we do not notice these thousand opportunities for strengthening ourselves and becoming more Christ-like, it is perhaps mainly because we never seriously settle down to consider the life of Christ, which should obviously engage the devout attention of anyone laying claim to the name of Christian—that is, *follower of Christ*. "If any man will come after Me," Our Lord said to His disciples, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."[1]

[1] Matt. xvi. 24.

And it would be a sad error to imagine, as so many seem to do, that the closer following of Christ is a matter which only concerns those who outwardly make a special profession of religious life.

Mental prayer a help.

It was said above that carelessness about opportunities for self-denial sprang from want of serious reflection. The practice of making mental prayer, or meditation, is a powerful antidote for such thoughtlessness. But even those who do not regularly meditate will find a safeguard against this lack of reflection in a *spiritual Retreat.*

Spiritual Retreats.

What it means.

A "Retreat" means *retirement* from worldly pursuits for a time in order to attend to the affairs of the soul, by meditating at length upon the truths of Faith, and examining into one's spiritual state and daily conduct, for the purpose of reformation or improvement.

The degree of retirement will depend upon a person's circumstances. Not everyone can set aside a few days, or even one, to be devoted exclusively to religious exercises in solitude and silence. Happy they who can! There is no greater help for leading a thoroughly Christian life.

Most useful to converts.

In the case of converts who have the opportunity, a Retreat would almost seem a necessary item in their Catholic outfit. The reason is not far to seek. During the instructions which preceded their admission into the Fold, attention was mainly concentrated on the doctrinal and controversial side of things. The nature of the case required this. As a consequence, time did not suffice for a full explanation of the *inner life* of a truly Catholic soul. The truths explained could not be applied, in all their practical con-

clusions, to the daily spiritual life. Any adequate attempt at such application would have bewildered the candidate, already sufficiently perplexed by the multiplicity and novelty of the matters laid before him.

After reception, and when the convert has begun to settle down quietly, nothing could be more profitable than to make a *short* Retreat (to begin with)—say, of three days' duration—in order to study the Faith from its *ascetical* side—that of soul-management and of progress in Christian holiness.

Opportunities galore.

Nowadays numerous opportunities are offered to Catholics of either sex, of all ages, and of every condition and walk in life, for making a *closed* Retreat—that is to say, a Retreat during which they leave their home, with all its cares and distractions, and take up their abode for the time being in some house devoted to Retreats, or in some convent. Public Retreats to numbers of people, preached by priests, are frequently held in various parts of England, and are usually advertised in the Catholic newspapers. In such advertisements mention is made of the person to whom application for board and lodging should be addressed.

Retreat details.

What is a Retreat? It consists of meditations on the main truths of Faith, proposed at some length by the preacher, and left to be pondered over, and applied to their individual needs, by his hearers. Instructions of a practical kind are also given concerning the various Christian duties or particular Christian virtues. The whole day is portioned out by time-table, and includes such things as spiritual reading, examination of conscience, visiting the Blessed Sacrament. Ample time is allowed for rest, meals, fresh air, and exercise, and also leisure for spontaneous devotion. Silence among the exercitants themselves is

usually insisted on for most of the day. The object of this restriction is not penance, but to promote an atmosphere of quiet recollection of mind. It also saves the shy or reserved from the necessity of intercourse with perfect strangers. These Retreats are, of course, held separately for the two sexes.

Imaginary fear of Retreats.

To some, who have never made a Retreat, the prospect of making one on such lines as the above may seem very alarming. They cannot think what on earth people do with themselves all alone, and cut off from their usual surroundings for three or four days. Yet there are very few who take the plunge that do not deeply appreciate the benefit and repeat the dose another time. The following account, given by an artisan after his *first* closed Retreat, fairly represents the common experience: "The first day I confess I felt a bit *lonely*. The second day I felt as if I could not be lonely *enough*." We are not sure that others besides laity would not subscribe to this description.

The reality.

Those who have had the privilege and consolation of giving Retreats to the working classes, whose daily life is less favourable to mental exercises than that of the more highly educated, will bear witness, along with the writer, to the eagerness and earnestness of all engaged, the peace and happiness which they find, and the general infusion of fresh vigour and courage for the struggles, temptations, and trials of life which they derive from Retreat. Even physically the liberal allowance of sleep, the regular life, and the restfulness of seclusion from a rackety world, send them back to their daily work refreshed and renewed. So that, quite apart from the renewal of the religious spirit, the settling up of difficulties of conscience, the clearing away of doubt as to the path of life indicated by the Divine Will, a Retreat is an

excellent investment even from a temporal point of view.

Spiritual renewal.

Spiritually, a Retreat made from time to time is to the soul what a "spring cleaning" is to a house, or "stock-taking" to a business. Nature herself reminds us by her seasons that all things earthly deteriorate with time, and need renewal. Our tailors', and above all our dressmakers' bills witness to the same law of this lower creation. It applies to priests and religious as much as to lay persons.

English Retreats.

Places for Retreat in England.—It may be useful to call attention to the provisions made for Public Closed Retreats in England. It will probably not be difficult to obtain information of the same kind in other English-speaking lands. By a Public Closed Retreat is meant one given to numbers of people in the retirement of some establishment or Convent. Retreats, like Missions, are sometimes preached in public churches, and —at a considerable distance—are the next best thing to a Closed Retreat, the *only* thing, indeed, for those who are tied by duties and work, and cannot leave their homes or occupations except at stated times in the day—perhaps for an odd hour in the evening.

Closed Retreats for Men.

1. Permanent Houses for Retreats: (*a*) Oakwood Hall, Romiley, Cheshire. Ten minutes from Romiley Station, and within easy walking distance of Marple Station. Ample and attractive grounds. Applications for information to be made to the Superior, at the above address.[1]

[1] In proof of the male appreciation for Retreats, it may be stated that as many as 400 men passed through the permanent House of Retreat, formerly at Compstall Hall, Marple, between May and October, 1909, in batches averaging about twenty-four men each.

(*b*) Campion Retreat House, Spring Grove (Osterley Park), Isleworth, London, W. Three minutes from Osterley Park Tube Station. Applications to be made to the Superior. (*c*) Craighead, Bothwell. N.B.—Applications to be made to Rev. R. Middleton, S.J.

2. Annual Retreat for Men, at the time of the August Bank Holiday, held at "La Retraite," Atkins Road, Clapham Road, London, S.W. Applications to be made to Catholic Church, Nightingale Square, Balham, London, S.W.

Closed Retreats for Women.

For women.

These are given at a variety of Convents. They may be *private*—that is, made by an individual with the help of the nuns and such priestly aid as may be available—or they may be public, and given by a priest to a number of females together. There are Convents where the latter are held in quick succession during the year, being specially devoted to this work; while in others they occur only once in a way, because the institutions concerned are at other times taken up with education work, and may not have accommodation for Retreats except during the holidays of the scholars. One or two larger Convents have extra accommodation, such as the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Roehampton, London, S.W. Hence it is best to mention under separate heads those Convents where Retreats are being continually held, and those where they take place occasionally. Retreats given *occasionally* to *special classes* of persons will be mentioned under a separate heading. It is less necessary to speak

of Retreats given to schools and institutions under the charge of Religious or others. Nevertheless, it is sometimes possible to obtain admission to these by private arrangement with the authorities —especially in the case of Retreats given to former pupils from outside.

The Cenacle.

There are three Convents in England, all belonging to the Religious of Our Lady of the Cenacle, entirely devoted to the holding of Public Retreats in rapid succession throughout the year. All classes, categories, and ages are catered for: ladies, working people, children in the elementary schools, guilds, nurses, shop-girls, mill-hands, mothers, etc. Here are the addresses:

The Cenacle, St. Gertrude's House, Alexandra Park, Manchester. (This is the head house, and noviciate of the Order.)

The Cenacle, 63, Stamford Hill, London, N.

The Cenacle, 7, Lance Lane, Wavertree, Liverpool.

The Cenacle, Grayshott, Hindhead, Surrey, continual to ladies, from Passion week to autumn.

Convent of the Retreat of the Sacred Heart (from Bruges), Penryn, Somerset Road, Birmingham, Retreats from March to the autumn, of three days, week-end, one day, for all ages and both sexes.

The name "Cenacle" refers to the "Upper Chamber" in Jerusalem, to which the Apostles and disciples of Christ retired in company with Our Blessed Lady, to prepare in seclusion and prayer for the coming of the Holy Ghost.

All applications to be made to the Rev. Mother Superior of the respective Cenacles. A very moderate charge is made, or an offering expected, *according to the person's means.*

Convents.—Some other Convents in England where Retreats for Ladies are held from time to time are: The Sacred Heart Convent, Roehampton, London, S.W.; and the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Upper Drive, Brighton, Sussex;

the Convents of the Holy Child, Mayfield, St. Leonard's-on-Sea, and Harrogate, Yorks; and St. Mary's Convent, Micklegate Bar, York. The dates of these Retreats are uncertain for the most part, and must be ascertained either by application to the respective Rev. Mothers, or from advertisements in the Catholic Press. A reasonable charge is made for board and lodging.

Special Retreats.—1. For *Teachers:* yearly at the Convent of Notre Dame, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool.

Notre Dame, Dowanhill, Glasgow, in July to Children of Mary, one Retreat.

Daughters of Wisdom, Moorfields, Preston, Lancs., to workers, Easter week and week following August Bank Holiday (Preston holiday week).

"Bank Holiday" Retreats.

2. For *Working girls,* etc., beginning the Friday evening immediately preceding the August Bank Holiday, and ending on the morning of the day after the said holiday. Those — usually the majority—who are unable to leave their occupations or work as early as Friday evening are welcome to join as soon as they are free on Saturday. But when this delay can be avoided, it should be; for the Retreat work becomes to the late arrivals something like beginning to build a house omitting the foundations. Still, much good may be, and, as experience shows, is derived by those who enter Retreat at the earliest they are honestly able.

Where given.

The following are the places where these particular Retreats are given: (1) At the Cenacle Convents mentioned in the preceding sections; (2) Convent of the Religious of St. Andrew, Coventry Hall, Streatham, London, S.W.; (3) Sacred Heart Convent, 28, West Hill, Wandsworth; (4) Convent of the Ladies of Mary, Coloma, Tavistock Road, West Croydon, the last three at the August Bank Holiday; (5) "La Retraite" Convents, Clapham Park, S.W.; Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset, etc.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CLOSE OF LIFE

NOTHING is more distinctive of the Catholic Faith than the richness of its resources for smoothing the sick-pillow and sweetening the bitterness of death. On the other hand, nothing reveals the inherent weakness of other forms of Christianity more clearly than their helplessness in that solemn hour, when poor humanity most needs comfort and support. The following illustration is vouched for from the personal knowledge of the writer. Names are omitted, for obvious reasons. A Catholic lady once undertook to carry a message to an Anglican Vicar—a man worthy of respect in many ways—on behalf of a poor distracted wife whose husband was at the point of death. The clergyman had called once to see his sick parishioner, and had done for him all that the Book of Common Prayer requires. The messenger reached the Vicarage—which was close at hand—between 10 and 11 p.m. On her explaining to the Vicar that the wife begged him to come to her dying husband, he replied: "My good woman, what is the use of your coming to me at this hour? What can I do for the poor man? I can't prevent his dying!" And yet that clergyman was well known for his kindness to the sick and poor—the Catholic poor included. But, apparently, he entertained no exorbitant ideas of the powers attached to his Anglican

The best Church to *die* in.

ministry for sustaining a soul in its dread passage to eternity, and did not see what good he could do by further attendance.

Non-Catholic appreciation.

The non-Catholic poor in hospitals are often at little pains to conceal their envy of their Catholic fellow-sufferers when they notice the comfort and courage these derive from the repeated visitation of their priest. It is no rare occurrence for such to apply for the Catholic priest at the approach of death, unless they despair of overcoming difficulties arising from hospital or workhouse regulations. It is probable, too, that the frequency with which hospital nurses seek admission into the Catholic Church is largely due to their exceptional opportunities for gauging the respective merits of religions when these are put to the supreme test of approaching death.

We all know the story of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformer who, when asked anxiously by his dying mother whether it was safe for her to die in his new religion, replied that it was safe, indeed, but that it was saf*er* to die in the old one. And, in truth, non-Catholic religions are well enough for *living* in—that is, when life is mainly happy and prosperous—but they have a terrible trick of leaving their professors in the lurch in the hour of sorest need—and chiefly at the hour when this world, with all its artificial props, is vanishing away.

Sickness.—The time of illness—I refer to *serious illness*, not to small and passing ailments—is generally one of spiritual progress, or of spiritual declension. It seldom leaves the patient where it found him. The nature of the change, whether for good or for evil, will depend upon the conduct of the sufferer. If the illness be regarded, as a matter of course, in the light of a complete holiday from all spiritual effort, it will in a greater or lesser degree demoralize the soul. Naturally, a

person weakened by sickness will not be capable of as much formal prayer as one who is in ordinary health. But that is not what we are speaking of here. It is not so much a question of set prayers as of spirit and dispositions of heart, to be kept alive by short upliftings of the soul to God in acts of faith, hope, charity, penitence, and, at all events, *resignation* to God's Will—if the soul cannot rise to a glad acceptance of suffering as a bond of union with Christ crucified and a precious gift from God, for, as St. Ignatius says, it is no less truly a gift than health.

"Spirituals" for the sick.

No Catholic should be without a Crucifix and a Rosary of Our Lady, and these aids to piety should be within reach of the sick-bed. It is often a great charity to *encourage* and *assist* the sick to perform some devotions (discreetly measuring the amount according to the strength of the patients, and not overdosing them with piety).

If the nature of the illness permit, and a church be within reach, the sick person should be encouraged to receive Holy Communion as often as circumstances allow. But care should be had to warn the priest of any difficulty in retaining food to which the patient may be liable, so that the Blessed Sacrament may not be exposed to risk of irreverence.

It would be a mistake to argue that the sick, being out of the way of mischief, do not stand in need of Sacraments, unless they happen to be dangerously ill. Sickness is no specific against temptation, even against such as beset the person when in health and vigour, and, moreover, it has special temptations of its own. The general weakening of the faculties and powers which often attends illness is not favourable to repelling the evil suggestions of the enemy. The use of the Bread of Life for strengthening the super-

natural vitality of the soul, therefore, can ill be dispensed with by the invalid.

Preparations needed.

Requisites for Communion to the Sick.—The sick-room should be made *clean* and *tidy*. When the Divine Physician is coming less attention to this point should not be paid than when the doctor's visit is expected. As far as illness permits, this twofold preparation should be applied in substance to the patient as well.

Things wanted.

The things needed for the rite are: (1) A medium-sized table covered with a *clean* linen cloth or napkin. (2) On the table, a *crucifix* (not a mere cross), and, preferably, one that can be stood up. (3) Two wax candles in candlesticks, placed on either side of the crucifix. Both the latter and the candles should be arranged at the back of the table, to leave space for the priest to work in.[1] (4) A *small* vessel containing Holy Water, and by its side a brush (or sprig from a bush or tree) for sprinkling with. (5) A *small* vessel or wine-glass containing a *small* quantity of *drinking*-water—say, half a wine-glassful.

In houses where there is a chapel *for celebration of Mass*, a *burse* containing a *corporal* and a *purificator* (the latter to be placed by the side of the *drinking*-water) will be procurable. These are needed; but if the Blessed Sacrament is brought from outside, the priest will ordinarily bring both these requisites with him, and perhaps Holy Water, too; but it is always best to prepare the latter. Holy Water should be in every Catholic household kept marked, and in a decent place. At all events, it can easily be procured at a church or religious house.

[1] Flowers, though a very suitable offering to the Blessed Sacrament, are not essential. Sometimes, indeed, anxiety about this extra decoration leads to forgetting one or other of the *necessaries*.

Receiving the Divine Guest.

It is a good custom to be ready in time to receive the priest, or, rather, the Blessed Sacrament, at the *house-door* with a lighted candle, and to *precede* him in silence to the sick-room.[1] If two persons are available for carrying lighted candles, all the better.

If the priest, after using the drinking-water for "purification," should leave it behind him on departing, it must not be thrown into a sink, but reverently thrown into the earth—*e.g.*, in a garden —or else on to the fire.

Prepare altar in houses of the poor.

This section may fittingly end with the following suggestion: It is a very praiseworthy form of devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament to help in preparing the necessaries for Communion to the sick and dying, particularly in the homes of the poor, who may not know how to prepare, or may lack the means of providing the necessary things. Those who charitably visit the poor might add this service of love towards the Holy Sacrament to their other charitable offices.

Attendance on the Dying.

Though the main part of this duty naturally falls to the priest, still those nursing the sick can do much to assist the immortal soul, as well as the perishable and perishing body.

Sending for the priest.

It should not be necessary to point out that even if the sick person has not asked for the priest, or seems disinclined to face the evident gravity of his condition, the priest should nevertheless be privately sent for. The approach of death is no time to be standing on ceremony or lending a weak ear to repugnances expressed at the suggestion of last Sacraments, upon the

[1] A priest arriving with the Blessed Sacrament neither expects nor wants to be talked to till the rite is over. Social greetings would be singularly out of place till then.

securing of which betimes the salvation of the patient's soul may often depend.[1] If, however, the priest is likely to meet with resistance from the patient, it would be well to warn him beforehand.

Considering patient's powers.

In ministering to the spiritual needs of the dying, a golden mean should be observed between neglect of religion and overdosing with piety. One may plague and overtax the limited strength of the invalid by long prayers, which are rather an indulgence of one's own private devotion and sentiments than piety considerately adapted to the powers of the sick. Hence the invalid should be consulted both as regards the selection and the amount. It will be good to notice or ascertain what ejaculatory prayers the person is in the habit of using ; these are likely to prove more helpful than any choice of our own.

Indulgenced aspirations.

Subject to this proviso, the departing soul may be comforted by having suggested or recited *indulgenced* aspirations like the following : " My Jesus, mercy !"[2] " Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in Thee !"[3] " Jesus !" to which an Indulgence is attached for *every utterance*, and a Plenary Indulgence for the hour of death in the case of those who have been in the habit of invoking the Holy Name during life, even if now only able to say it in their hearts.[4] The invocation of the Sacred Names, " Jesus, Mary !" is also indulgenced.[5] " Sweetest Jesus, be to me, not a Judge, but a Saviour !"[6] " My Lady and my Mother, remember I am thine ; protect and defend me as thy property and possession !"[7] " Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul ! Jesus,

[1] A full discussion of " putting off last Sacraments " will be found in *Letters on Christian Doctrine*, vol. iii., pp. 6-15.

[2] *Raccolta* (English edition, 1909), No. 61, p. 57.

[3] *Ibid.*, No. 175, p. 149.

[4] *Ibid.*, No. 45, p. 38.

[5] *Ibid.*, No. 69, p. 59.

[6] *Ibid.*, No. 62, p. 57.

[7] *Ibid.*, No. 219, p. 213.

Mary, Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you !" [1]

Short acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Contrition are most advisable. For example: "My God, I *believe* all Thou hast taught me by Thy Word and by Thy Church, *because Thou art the Truth!* I *hope* in Thy *goodness, power, and promises* for Heaven, and for help to obtain it: I *love* Thee, *because Thou art Goodness itself!* I am heartily *sorry* for offending *Thy Infinite Goodness*, and resolve by Thy grace to sin no more." These are given merely as indications of what is needed for constituting the four acts. Any words will do, provided the *motive* proper to each act (which is underlined above, together with the *quality* of the act) be expressed or mentally intended.[2] Acts of Faith, Hope, etc.

Another way of helping the dying is to offer them the crucifix to kiss, suggesting to them the Holy Name "Jesus." Nor let us forget the burden of the prayers offered by the Church in blessing Holy Water, which sacramental is consequently a valuable adjunct to a Catholic death-bed.[3]

Extreme Unction.—No special preparations of a ceremonial kind are needed for the Last Anointing. Of course, if Communion is to be administered as well—that is, as "Viaticum," or "Food for the journey"—the same preparations will be needed as in the case of Communion to the Sick.[4] The main point, besides privately joining the priest in praying for the dying person, is to remember that the priest anoints the feet of the patient (whether male or female) immediately after the hands, and therefore an assistant should be ready to bare the feet as far as the instep only, when the moment arrives, and with as little discomfort to the patient or exposure to cold as Last Anointing.

[1] *Raccolta*, No. 427, p. 369.
[2] *Ibid.*, No. 14, p. 12.
[3] See back, p. 177.
[4] See back, p. 336.

possible. The nature of the illness, or some other good reason, may lead the priest to omit this particular unction, which is not *essential* to the Sacrament.

The last moments.

When the soul is evidently in its last agony, the prayers "For a Departing Soul," or the "Commendation of the Soul," should be *quietly* recited at the bedside. This function is not reserved to the priest, nor to the male sex, though if a priest be present it is more fitting that he should perform it.

After Death.

Reverence due to the body.

All respect is due even to the mortal remains of the faithful. They have been hallowed by the reception of many Sacraments. They have been sanctified by the consecrated waters of Baptism, by the Holy Chrism of Confirmation. Nay, they have been repeatedly made the living tabernacles of the Real Body and Blood of Christ. These considerations no doubt have their place in the forbiddance by the Church of "cremation" as a form of Christian burial, though by themselves and apart from that prohibition, they might not seem a *conclusive* objection to the practice.

The dead body, after the usual attentions, should be reverently composed, with the hands joined in front, a crucifix or rosary being placed between them.[1]

A crucifix should be placed on a table near at hand, with a vessel containing Holy Water. But, as *Catholic Customs* prudently notes,[2] if candles be lit, precautions should be taken against fire. These ought not to be left burning during the

[1] These objects need not be buried with the body, though they may be. As regards *relics* (of the True Cross, or of the Saints), which the deceased may have been accustomed to wear during life, to bury these with the dead would be *most* improper, not to say sinfully irreverent.

[2] See list of books, I., at end of chapter.

night, unless people are watching and praying by the deceased.

But though the body claims its share of respect, the Catholic instinct will lead us to think *chiefly* of the departed *soul*. Such thought, especially concerning one who has died a Christian death, will even mitigate distress at the memory of the great sufferings that may have preceded dissolution, which no longer afflict the departed, and yet very commonly enter largely into the sorrow of the bereaved, who forget that they are now a thing of the past, and stand the departed soul in good stead as satisfaction for sin—which otherwise would have to be paid in Purgatory—or a cause of greater glory in Heaven.

The soul the *chief* consideration.

Instead of wasting money on *unnecessary* pomp and display in funeral rites, it is a far truer charity to the dead to get Masses said for them. That *will* benefit them, while costly shrouds, coffins, and long lines of mourning coaches, etc., certainly will avail them naught. For this same reason, one regrets that Catholics should spend money upon funeral wreaths. Flowers at funerals are not a *Catholic* idea, except when the dead are innocent children, who have gone unsullied by this world of sin straight to the bosom of Jesus. We can obtain the right cue in this matter by referring to the Roman Ritual, and comparing the Burial Service for Adults with that appointed for children. The latter Service is throughout a song of joy and thanksgiving for the assured triumph of the Sacred Heart in a soul that has never soiled its baptismal robe. The one for adults, on the contrary, is full of the spirit of mourning, and of satisfaction to the Divine justice, coupled with compunction of the living for their own sins, viewed in the light of those Divine judgments which are so vividly recalled to their minds by death.

Misplaced expense.

Flowers and the soul-harrowing dirge of the *Dies Iræ* seem strangely incongruous.

Flowers from non-Catholics.

Yet one cannot blame non-Catholic friends, who send wreaths in token of sorrow and sympathy for the living and of affection for the dead. They do not, for the most part, believe in Purgatory, nor, consequently, in offering suffrages for departed souls ; neither have they any Holy Sacrifice to offer for them. So they are driven to express their praiseworthy sentiments by means of floral tributes, and it is nice of them so to do. But such adornments are best not placed on the coffin *during the Church service*, as being out of keeping with the mind of the Church. There is no objection to their being deposited at the grave, and this will save the regrettable appearance of ingratitude for the kindly natural feeling with which they have been sent.

Catholic mortuary cards.

Another point to which it may be well to call the convert's attention is the *proper style of mortuary cards*, or notices. "In loving memory of . . .," etc., is not a Catholic opening to such printed reminders. The Catholic purpose of the cards is not to provide a souvenir, but *to secure prayers for the departed soul.* Hence, the Catholic form is preferable : "Of your charity, pray for the soul of —— [Christian name and surname, without prefix], who departed this life [date], aged [age]," adding, perhaps, "Fortified by the Rites of the Church," if such be the case, and some little *indulgenced* prayer for the dead. The initials R.I.P. are usually put at the end of the notice. Texts of Scripture or other quotations, in allusion to *virtues* noticed in the deceased, jar somewhat with the prayer of the Church at the bier : "Enter not, O Lord, into judgment with this Thy servant, for in Thy sight no man shall be justified," etc. There seems no objection to quotations *recommending prayers for the dead*, or

appealing for mercy, such as: "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me!"[1] or passages from the Fathers or Saints of kindred import. The praises of men, however well founded, are unsuited to the time when, if worthy, "everyone shall have praise from God." "Judge not before the time."[2]

Early notices.

In the case of those who can afford it, the first thing to do is to have larger notices printed at once for sending to churches, convent chapels, and Catholic institutions, to be posted up in a public place, so as to obtain the prayers of the general faithful. These can usually be had at short notice from Catholic repositories or publishers. The smaller notices or cards, for insertion in Prayer-Books, involving, perhaps, the selection of some suitable pious picture, may be prepared more at leisure. But before any printed notices can be made ready, the priests at the nearest church should be notified of the death, so that they may publicly request the prayers of the congregation at the next Mass.

The departed soul *first.*

The fundamental principle, then, by which Catholics should be guided in everything connected with their dead is the *need of the departed soul.* All else should be held as *secondary.* However good and holy a life may appear to human eyes, the Infinite Sanctity of God may perceive many blemishes, which entail delay in that place of expiation which the Church calls Purgatory. In spite of their virtues, let us pray for our dead as if they had been the worst of sinners.

If prayers not needed.

If the satisfactions we offer to God's merciful acceptance should not be needed for the particular soul prayed for, they certainly will not be thrown away. They will go towards relieving some other

[1] Job xix. 21. [2] 1 Cor. iv. 5.

brother or sister belonging to the household of the Faith, who perhaps has few or none to reckon upon for help. Nor ought we to grudge this transference of our satisfactions to other souls. Are we not all members of one and the same redeemed family of Jesus Christ? Does not the "Communion of Saints," which we profess in the Creed, entitle us to a participation in each other's spiritual goods?

It is only right, therefore, that our superfluities should go into the family purse for the relief of its more needy members.

Prayers for non-Catholic dead.

For the sake of converts, it should be said, in conclusion, that they are not forbidden, but, on the contrary, are encouraged, to offer suffrages for the souls of their departed non-Catholic relations and friends. But they must not expect the priest to ask prayers for them in public, this being an official recognition and privilege naturally reserved to those who die in open communion with the Catholic Church. Still less can the Holy Sacrifice be publicly announced as offered for their souls. Yet there is nothing to prevent a priest from privately remembering them at the Altar out of charity, and therefore they should be recommended to his sacrifices and prayers.

NOTE TO THE APPENDIX FOLLOWING.

The law now bearing directly on Children's First Communion is contained in Canon 854:

(*a*) In danger of death it is enough for the child to know how to distinguish the Body of Christ from common food and to adore It reverently, in order that the most Holy Eucharist can, as it ought to, be administered.

(*b*) Outside the danger of death, a fuller knowledge of Christian doctrine and a more careful preparation are justly demanded—namely, the knowledge, according to the child's capacity, of those mysteries of faith which are absolutely necessary for salvation, and devout approach to the most Holy Eucharist commensurate with the child's age.

APPENDIX I

PARENTS AND FIRST COMMUNION OF CHILDREN.

SINCE the first appearance of the present volume, Pope Pius X. caused a decree to be issued to the whole Catholic Church enforcing the true interpretation of the old ecclesiastical law[1] concerning the duties of Confession and Communion. This authoritative pronouncement, known as the Decree 'Quam Singulari,'[2] deals mainly with the age at which children begin to be bound under pain of sin to receive the Holy Eucharist, at all events at Easter, and with the conditions for their doing so.

One of the Papal rulings contained in this disciplinary decree runs as follows:

'IV. The obligation of Confession and Communion, binding the child, falls principally upon those who have charge of it—that is, upon the parents, confessor, teacher, and parish priest. To the father, or whoever holds his place, and to the confessor, it belongs, according to the Roman Catechism, to admit the child to its First Communion.'

This rule, therefore, throws upon the responsible persons mentioned the main burden of seeing that a child makes its First Communion *at the age* and *under the conditions* prescribed by the law of the Church, as explained in the 'Quam Singulari.' So let us see what the decree lays down concerning these two points.

The *age* for Confession and for First Communion is 'the age

[1] Council of Lateran, IV., A.D. 1215.
[2] Approved August 8, 1910.

of discretion,' or 'the age at which the child begins to use its reason'—that is, 'about its seventh year, or later, or even sooner' (Rule I.).

Thus, it is the dawning of reason, and not any fixed number of years, which is to decide the time when a child begins to be bound under pain of sin to receive Communion (at Easter), as well as to make Confession. Discretion—in the moderate measure above implied—will, of course, come earlier or later, according to the speed of the individual child's mental development. Even in these northern climes, one not unfrequently meets with children of five or six who exhibit clear symptoms of reasoning power. The decision as to whether the child has reached the use of reason lies between the father—or whoever holds his place—and the child's confessor (Rule IV.).

The *conditions* for suitable preparation before First Communion are, according to the decree, that the child should know the religious truths *essential for salvation;* that is, it must grasp—but only 'according to its capacity'—the truth of the Holy Trinity; the Incarnation of God the Son and His death on the Cross for our redemption; and that God is the Rewarder of the good and Punisher of the wicked. As regards the Blessed Sacrament, it is enough, we are taught, if the child 'distinguishes the Eucharistic bread from common and material bread, so as to approach the Holy Eucharist with such devotion as befits its age' (Rule III.). Thus we see that 'a full and perfect knowledge of Christian doctrine is not necessary for First Confession, nor for First Communion. But the child must afterwards gradually learn the whole Catechism in the measure of its capacity' (Rule II.). The moderate demands of the Church conveyed by the expressions 'according to its capacity,' 'as befits its age,' and 'in the measure of its capacity,' should be well noticed.

The duty, however, of parents, and of others in charge, does not end with admitting the child to its First Communion in concert with the priest to whom it makes its confession. They must besides 'take the utmost care that after their First

Communion the said children should approach the Holy Table very often,[1] and, if it be possible, even daily, as Jesus Christ and our Holy Mother Church desire it, and that they do so with such devotion of soul as their age allows' (Rule VI.).[2]

The Holy See further bids those in charge of the young to 'remember the most grave duty incumbent on them of seeing that the children are present at the public lessons in Catechism, or of supplying this religious instruction in some other way' (Rule VI.).

Here the convert has in substance the duties of parents, and others with regard to the First Communion of little children—their honoured part in 'suffering' little children to come to the Divine Lover of their innocence and candour.

To this one may add that in these precocious days the Eucharistic training of small children may with profit be begun very early. It may be greatly forwarded from infancy by accustoming them to the church, the altar, the tabernacle, the light burning before the latter, and by taking them to Benediction, explaining to them, when they begin to question, why the altar is lighted up, what the priest is doing when the bell rings, or, at Mass time, when he gives something to the people at the rails, and the like.[3]

What is the object of such early First Communion? That Christ may enter and possess these young hearts before sin does, and may strengthen them against temptation with the Bread of Life. That as soon as a child becomes capable of using its reason in order to sin, it may have given to it at once 'the antidote by which we are delivered from daily (venial) faults, and are preserved from deadly sins.'[4] And if it should

[1] *Sæpius* (Latin text).

[2] See *Parents and Frequent Communion of Children* (Sands and Co.); also 'Children's Health and Frequent Communion,' article in the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart* (for England), August, 1909.

[3] 'Eucharistic Training of Children,' in *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, August, 1910. See also *The Bread of Children*, a child's book of Eucharistic instruction, in large type and illustrated (Burns Oates and Washbourne).

[4] Council of Trent.

seem to us irreverent to give the Most Holy Eucharist to little mites who have but a partial understanding of its untold sacredness, we must recall the fundamental teaching of the earlier decree 'On Daily Communion.' There we are taught that Our Lord's chief purpose in giving Himself as our spiritual Food is *not* 'that the honour and reverence due to Our Lord may be safeguarded,' but that the needs of our weak and sinful souls may be supplied. The words are: 'That they (the faithful) may thence derive strength to resist their sinful passions, to cleanse themselves from daily' (venial) 'faults, and to avoid those graver sins to which human frailty is liable.'[1]

Hence the later decree, 'Quam Singulari,' is only the natural development of the earlier one. It merely applies to the case of little children the selfsame principle—namely, that Our Lord, in the great love and humility of His Sacred Heart, willed the use of Holy Communion to be governed not so much by consideration for His own honour and dignity—any more than was His Sacred Passion—but rather by man's dire need of this 'Divine Remedy.'

And—as the recent decree virtually argues—if He so graciously willed this even for the penitent soul with a sinful past behind it, how much more must He desire to enter the innocent and unspoilt souls of those little ones whom, while on earth He delighted to have round Him, to caress, to bless, and take to His holy embrace!

It is, then, the sacred duty and the high privilege of those who hold these precious souls in trust for Jesus, to give Him the earliest possible possession of them in Holy Communion, and, by exact compliance with the Papal commands, prevent His being forestalled by Satan. 'Herein,' writes Cardinal Gennari, 'lies the most efficacious means for saving youth, and reviving the Christian spirit in human society.'[2]

The 'Quam Singulari' is no mere pious exhortation. It is

[1] Third paragraph of the said decree.
[2] *Monitore Ecclesiastico*, September 30, 1910.

in substance nothing less than an authoritative explanation by the Church of God of an old ecclesiastical law, binding under sin, but which has come to be imperfectly understood. Moreover, that old law, 'still in force,' is itself an authentic interpretation of a *Divine* command to receive the Blessed Eucharist: 'Except you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you.'[1] The Church —the appointed interpreter to us of the will of Christ—tells us how often, when, and under what conditions, that Divine precept must be fulfilled. But for her teaching we should be left in doubt—like those who rely upon the Bible *only*—regarding a matter which Our Lord distinctly puts as a condition for keeping in His grace and gaining eternal life.

P.S.—The above being only a partial survey of the decree, the reader is recommended to study the whole document, now to be had in English.[2]

Indulgences for First Communions.

By a decree of the (late) Congregation of Indulgences, dated July 12, 1905, the Holy See has granted the following Indulgences in connection with First Communions:

1. A Plenary Indulgence for the children who, having been to Confession, shall pray for 'the Pope's Intentions' on the day of their First Communion.

2. A Plenary Indulgence for relatives of the said children down to the third degree of relationship (included) who attend the ceremony of First Communion, provided that, after going to Confession, they receive Communion and pray for 'the Pope's Intentions.'

3. An Indulgence of *seven days and seven quarantines* to all the faithful who, being at least contrite of heart, shall attend the said ceremony.

[1] John vi. 54.
[2] To be found in *Early First Communion.*

APPENDIX II

SCAPULAR-MEDALS

In past years the Holy See has granted to individual priests a faculty for blessing a medal, or medals, which persons previously enrolled in the various Scapulars may carry about them in place of the woollen emblems, and still gain all the Indulgences and privileges attached to the latter. These grants have differed in details, and such divergences had begun to create a certain confusion; hence the Holy See, by two decrees of the Holy Office, both dated December 16, 1910, issued a fixed code of rules for all Scapular medals, and also defined the position of previous grants. The following are the main provisions concerning the laity:

1. Those who have already been enrolled in one or more Scapulars are allowed to substitute instead a Scapular-Medal, duly blessed for the purpose.

2. It is optional whether they carry one such medal for several Scapulars, or one for *each* Scapular. If they use one single medal for a number of Scapulars, as many separate blessings must be given to the medal as there are Scapulars to be represented. These blessings may be given by different priests, or at different times, and in any order—that is, not necessarily in the order of enrolments.[1]

3. Any priest who has the power to bless and deliver a Scapular, by that very fact has power to bless a Scapular-Medal to be substituted *for the same.*

[1] *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, February, 1911, p. 94. The 'blessing' is given with a simple sign of the Cross.

4. The medal, or medals, used must bear the following impressions: on the one side a representation of Our Lord showing His Sacred Heart—not a mere emblem of the Heart by itself; and on the other side *any* representation of Our Lady, of whatever title.

5. N.B.—Scapulars of 'Third Orders'—*e.g.*, those used by Tertiaries of St. Francis—are *excluded* from the present faculty.

6. A Scapular-Medal worn in place of the Brown Scapular (of Mount Carmel) carries with it the Sabbatine Privilege, as well as all the Indulgences attached to the Brown Scapular.

Faculties formerly granted to particular priests for blessing Scapular-Medals continue to hold good (subject to the terms contained in each) for *five years*, counting from the date upon which the respective grants were issued. After that the said faculties cease. But, until the expiration of that period, such priests have power to bless the medals, even though they have not power to bless the corresponding *Scapulars*. In using their old faculty, however, they must conform to the new regulations—*e.g.*, as to the kind of medal used and the number of blessings to be given.

NOTE TO PAGE 161.

There are two cases in which Catholics can be now married without the presence of the proper parish priest. Canon 1,098 states: If neither the parish priest, nor the Ordinary, nor a delegated priest can be had or approached in order to assist at marriage in accordance with the canons, then:

1°. In danger of death marriage contracted in presence of the witnesses alone is valid and licit; and also apart from danger of death, provided it be prudently foreseen that this state of things (viz., absence of the proper priest) will last for a month.

2°. In both cases, if another priest is at hand who can be present, he must be summoned, and assist, together with the witnesses, at the marriage, without prejudice, however, to the validity of the marriage in presence of two witnesses alone.

I. SOME BOOKS SUITABLE FOR CONVERTS AND INQUIRERS.

The Threshold of the Catholic Church. By Canon Bagshawe.

The Catechism Explained. By H. Canon Cafferata.

The Faith of Old England. By V. Hornyold, S.J. C.T.S.

The Convert's Guide. By E. C. B., Religious of S. Andrew. C.T.S.

Letters on Christian Doctrine. 3 vols. By F. M. de Zulueta, S.J.

I. The Commandments.
II. The Sacraments (first four).
III. The Sacraments (last three).

The Christian Faith. By Père Suau, S.J.

A Short Course of Catholic Doctrine. By Rev. W. B. Kelly.

The Catholic Faith. Approved by Pope Leo XIII.

Catholic Customs : A Guide to the Laity in England. C.T.S.

A Simple Cyclopædia. By C. H. Bowden. C.T.S.

The Student's Catholic Doctrine. By Rev. C. Hart.

A Shorter Bible History. By Rev. C. Hart.

The Credentials of the Catholic Church. By Canon Bagshawe.

The Faith of Our Fathers. By Cardinal Gibbons.

The Catalogue of the Catholic Truth Society. This contains a very large number of cheap publications, controversial, historical, and devotional, on almost every point that can concern the convert or inquirer. Apply 69, Southwark Bridge Road, London, S.E.

The Catholic Social Handbook. Issued yearly.

The Jesuit Directory for Current Year. 1s. Apply to the Editor, Catholic Church, Great Yarmouth.

The Catholic Directory for England, Scotland, and Wales. Price 3s. 6d. Burns Oates and Washbourne, Orchard Street, W., and 8-10, Paternoster Row, E.C. Contains full information about Catholic affairs in England, list of all Catholic churches and chapels, with hours of services and names of resident clergy, also a separate clergy list. Thus the convert about to take up residence, or a situation, or a holiday, in any part of the land can find out where Mass may be heard and Sacraments obtained.

II. LIST OF WORKS ON FREQUENT AND DAILY COMMUNION.

ANTONI, CANON: *Vain Fears that keep you from Frequent Communion.*

Roman Acts and Decrees. Concerning Frequent and Daily Communion.

ZULUETA, F. M. DE, S.J.: *Frequent and Daily Communion.* C.T.S.

Parents and Frequent Communion of Children. Sands.

Notes on Daily Communion.

The Ministry of Daily Communion. A Consideration for Priests.

Early First Communion. A full Commentary on the Decree "Quam Singulari."

Jesus the Bread of Children; or, Chats with Father Cyril.

The Eucharistic Triduum. An Aid for Priests.

Spoiling the Divine Feast. Lost Communions after the First.

The Divine Educator; or, Guide to the Promotion of Frequent and Daily Communion in Educational Establishments.

Gathered Fragments; or, Stray Leaves on Frequent Communion.

MCDONNELL, JOS., S.J.: *Half Hours with God; or, The Joys of Daily Mass and Frequent Communion.*

LOYOLA, MOTHER: *First Communion, A Book of Preparation for.*

Confession and Communion for those who Communicate frequently.

Welcome: Holy Communion before and after.

RUSSELL, MATTHEW, S.J.: *Communion Day.*

He is calling Me.

At Home near the Altar.

Close to the Altar Rails.

Moments before the Tabernacle.

ROCHE, W., S.J.: *Children's Bread.* Part I. Holy Mass and Communion.

The House and Table of God.

HOWE, CANON: *Simple Instructions on the Holy Eucharist.*

VILLEFRANCHE, G., S.J.: *Thanksgiving after Holy Communion in Union with the Sacred Heart.*

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f. placed after the page number = see footnote.
ibid. = same page—*i.e.*, as last mentioned.

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Printed in England

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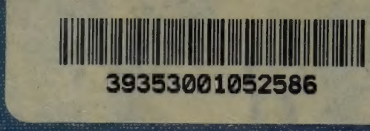
COLLEGE
1852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